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I MYSELF



MRS. T. P. O'CONNOR
FROM A DRAWING BY W. STRANG

I MYSELF

BY

MRS T. P. O'CONNOR

WITH FOURTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO THE
AUTHOR

TO
W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON
IN APPRECIATION OF THE HAPPINESS AND PRIDE
HE HAS GIVEN ME

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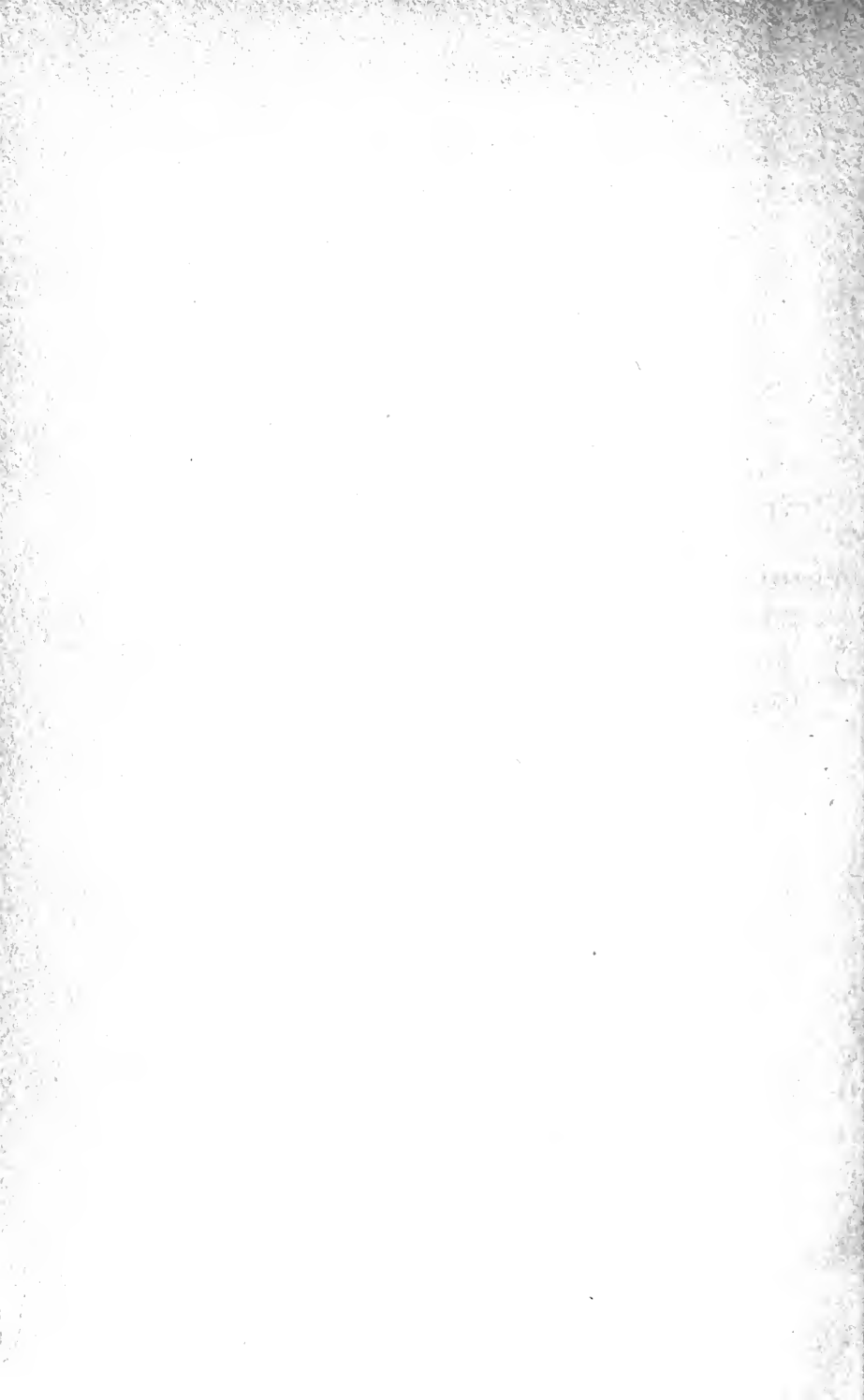
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" I POUR LOVE'S WINE AND BID THE WORLD TAKE PART
AROUND THE PURPLE ALTARS OF MY HEART."

I MYSELF

CHAPTER I

MY FIRST MEMORY

MY first memory is one of pain. I was the child of a romantic love marriage; my father was desperately in love with my mother, and she with him. She died of heart disease when I was a little girl and he was far away, but I have never forgotten her continued calls for him. Many years after, when his voice had grown weak from suffering, and he was at the gates of death, he tried to raise himself from the pillow, and called in a loud, clear voice: "Marcia! Marcia!" then fell back into unconsciousness. Her beloved name, which he had not spoken for years, was the last on his lips.

I have a theory that the children of two people who love profoundly have deeper affections than those whose parents are indifferent or philosophic towards each other; at any rate I was born with a most loving heart, and even yet, after years of disillusion, experience and trouble, it is still in the power of those whom I love to hurt me bitterly.

I was an unexpected and delicate child, and was greatly loved, and terribly indulged. According to the fashion of the South, I had a foster-mother, a very black young negress of twenty; she had already become the mother of two lusty little piccaninnies—shiny, coal-black, fat boys. I adored my "Mammy," and my adoration was returned a thousand-fold. Love means sacrifice: this poor slave was called upon to make woman's supremest sacrifice for her foster-child, and made it with the generosity of an entirely noble nature.

My two foster-brothers were much indulged and spoiled

by my father, who loved all children, white or black. They were continually in the front garden, rooting up flowers (my mother was a passionate gardener), throwing stones at the chickens, and doing other damage. At any rate, my mother, who had been born and brought up to slavery and its injustice as a matter of course (I was literally born detesting it, and I may say detesting all injustice), influenced my father to sell my negro Mammy and her two children to a woman who lived twenty-five miles from Austin in a little town called Bastrop.

I woke up one morning with a sweet-faced Irish nurse, whom I grew to love very fondly afterwards, and who lived with us for five or six years (she is now a rich woman and the mother of a prospective bishop), but she was a stranger, and I was told that Mammy was gone. I immediately dissolved into tears and wailings, and for a fortnight I cried out by day and by night: "I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy!" Toys were given to me, new dolls, I was allowed to choose my own dresses and sashes every day, but nothing in this world mattered to me—neither dolls, nor candy, nor ribbons. I was perfectly consistent, and I dare say must have wearied everybody out with my continual cry: "I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy!" Mary, my nurse, said to me: "Now, will you have the pink dress or the white dress?" I looked at the pink and white dresses through a rain of tears, and answered, "I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy!" Finally I cried myself into a high fever; the old family doctor was sent for, and came jogging along on a fat white horse with saddle-bags on each side, as was the custom in the country then; he came in the nursery and asked: "What is the matter with the little girl?" in a tone so kind and sympathetic that I fairly wailed in anguish: "I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy! I must have my Mammy!" The doctor loved children, and when my father said: "What are we going to do with this child, doctor?" he shook his head and answered, "You know, Judge, she is very delicate, she is now in a high fever; her nurse tells me that she has taken

scarcely any nourishment for the last week—she is literally starving from grief.”

“ I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy ! ”

The old doctor put his hand tenderly on my head and said, “ I really think there is nothing for it, Judge, except to buy her Mammy back again.”

“ Very well,” my father answered, “ I don’t care what it costs—I’ll do it.”

I was only four, not old enough to understand all the conversation, difficult to convince of Mammy’s return, and that day I refused to eat altogether. When the shadows were at their longest in the afternoon, my mother had persuaded me to go into the dining-room, an immense room with six long windows and two doors. I had not touched a morsel of food the entire day. She opened the doors of a cupboard which contained cream, and curds and whey, and cakes, and jellies, and preserves of all kinds, for my mother was a famous cook and noted housekeeper, and she began :

“ Now, if you would like a little peach preserve and a little cream you can have it.”

“ I want my Mammy,” I said.

“ Or if you would like a little cake and some milk you can have that.”

“ I want my Mammy.”

“ Oh, do,” she said, “ be reasonable, and try just a little bit of honey and some clabber.” (Milk with cream on the top, which turns sour in a hot country in perhaps less than an hour—it has a slightly acid taste, and is delicious.)

“ Take some clabber,” she said.

“ I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy ! ”

Suddenly a long ray of sunlight fell through the door ; I turned, and there, with the tears running down her dusty face, exhausted, travel-stained and bareheaded except for her many-coloured head-handkerchief, stood my Mammy. I gave one wild cry of delight, rushed towards her, and she gathered me in her black, strong arms.

“ Oh,” I said, “ I’ve got my Mammy ! I’ve got my Mammy ! ” And I began to pat her black cheeks and kiss

her all over her face. Then I tucked my head in her neck and almost fainted with joy.

"Why, Hester," I heard my mother say, "where have you come from?"

"Miss Marcia," she answered, "I have runned away. Ever since I left my white chile I've had awful dreams—I thought she was dyin' an' I could hear her cryin' for me, an' cryin' for me, an' cryin' for me, an' I know'd she wuz jus' breakin' her po' little heart—de chile got so much heart—an' las' night at eleven o'clock I got out of bed, stole out of the niggers' quarters, and since then I have walked twenty-five miles in de sun. I've had nothin' to eat or drink—I felt my baby wuz dyin', an' I jus' kep' on an' kep' on till I got here."

And about everything Mammy possessed an extraordinary prophetic instinct.

The next day, when we were all less emotional, my father spoke to her and said, "Hester, I am going down to Bastrop to buy you and your children back again."

He went and found the woman who had bought Mammy obdurate; she said the children were valuable, they were healthy boys, and she had got them very cheap—that Hester was lazy and he could buy her back if he liked, but no price would induce her to part with the children.

My father returned, bringing the bad news. "Well, Hester," he said, "I am very sorry, but I am afraid you have got to decide between my child and your boys. I won't buy you back and separate you from your children without your own consent."

She took the night to think it over, and then she gave her decision, saying: "Judge, Betty's a terrible, nervous, delicate chile, an' I think it would kill her if I left her; them little niggers of mine are strong healthy children—they'll grow up anyhow—so I have decided to stay with my white chile."

From that moment I was her bond-slave much more than she was ever mine. If I did not want to do anything Mammy had only to say: "I might have know'd this. I done give

up my own childern for you, an' here you're treatin' me without any respec'." And whatever it was, whether reasonable or not, I at once did her bidding. As I grew older I can remember my mother saying: "If you want Betty to do anything, get Hester to ask her."

That was my first memory, my first grief, and my first responsibility. Surely life began with me too soon.

CHAPTER II

A FIRST FAMILY OF VIRGINIA

MY great-grandfather, Major Duval, a proud and very elegant, dressy old gentleman of the old *régime*, was, according to the history of Virginia, the last man in Richmond who wore satin small-clothes and a bag wig. His ancestors were two brothers of aristocratic family and considerable fortune who came to America from Rouen. One of the (I think feeble) jokes of the family was, that we had come from Rouen, and we were going back to ruin—for we were as a family both unceasingly hospitable and thoughtlessly extravagant. My grandfather, on my father's side—also of French Huguenot extraction—had been a shopkeeper, and this was considered a terrible blot on the family escutcheon. No Duval had ever even scented trade. My mother, the proudest and most intolerant socially of all her family, had married a man whose father had been a merchant. Consequently, at an early age I was taught that I must combat the plebeian blood which came to me from my father's side of the family. No Duval ever had it, and no Duval had ever brought it into the family before—and whenever I did anything my mother particularly disliked she remarked to my very intolerantly aristocratic great-aunt, Miss Polly Hynes, who from time to time lived with us, that it was my “plebeian blood.” I used as a very young child to wonder if it was a different colour from other blood, and I remember once asking Mammy when I cut my finger badly not to tie it up, to let it bleed. I thought in this way I might get rid of the awful blood that was ever pursuing me, and getting me into bad favour and mischief. Even

my physical defects came from my plebeian blood. No Duval had ever had freckles—but I had freckles, Paschal freckles—and, what is worse, I've got them yet. Oh, that persistent plebeian blood! All the Duvals had small, aristocratic ears; mine were large, plebeian ears. And every self-respecting Duval woman wore a No. 1 shoe, and was the possessor of an Andalusian instep; I had the Paschal foot. If I had not passionately loved my father I might have wished that my mother had married some one else. And it was not, alas! only in my ears and my feet that my plebeian blood asserted itself; at an early age I evinced certain decidedly democratic tendencies that had to be combated with might and main, as no Duval ever had them (the truth being that I was a friendly, lonely, affectionate child, longing for companionship).

A family of delightful children lived near us, but their father was a tinsmith, and I was strictly forbidden to play with them, for they too were plebeians. Mary and Billy, the eldest boy and girl, were my own age, and Billy, in spite of my freckles (he had a goodly number of his own) and my ears, adored me. He used to give me strings of the most wonderful birds' eggs, for Texas is the land of birds, and once he brought me a live humming bird, but it died in an hour—and then he gave me a white rabbit with pink eyes. My mother was for sending it back at once, but it had already been concealed for a week, and become attached to me, and I cried piteously, and Mammy, and Aunt Polly Hynes, and my father, all interceded, and my father remarked that Bates was a very decent man, with decent children, and why couldn't I be allowed to be friends and play with them now and again? And my mother answered if she listened to *him* I would know every plebeian child in town, that Mammy was to take Billy a prize chicken the next day, and a riding whip, which would relieve us from the obligation of the white rabbit, and my acquaintance with the Bateses was at an end. Years afterward, when I came back home from boarding school, a motherless girl with the longest trains and the most elaborately dressed hair that

was ever seen, Billy, now rich and in the best society, was my very first visitor. Good, broad-faced, broad-shouldered, broad-souled, freckled-faced, Billy—not a bit put off by my plebeian defects—was still adoring. But Austin was a military post, there were numbers of young officers in gorgeous uniforms, with dash and mystery about them. Billy was just Billy of the birds' eggs and the white rabbit, whom I had known all my life. There was no mystery about him. His nature was as clear and pellucid as a crystal spring. He was unpretentious, simple, honest, truthful, straightforward, honourable, high-minded, and as hard wearing and honest as his good father's good tin—a true gentleman. But I infinitely preferred a long blue cloak lined with red, a close-fitting uniform with brass buttons, and a red sash, a military cap set jauntily on the head, a splendid dancer (Billy got on my toes) and Swinburne read aloud. Only eyes that have wept much can see clearly—mine had not been cleared by tears of sorrow. I was still blind with youth's unreal visions.

Few women have the good fortune to love Billys at sixteen. The spurious glitter of life fills and dazzles the eyes at that tender age.

Although my mother had been the most exclusive person in our little town, and an aristocrat to her very small fingertips, she was really not so hidebound in her views as Mammy, who preached eternally on the necessity of keeping to your own class.

"But, Mammy," as a child I used to say, "the Bateses are very nice, and Mary has beautiful clothes for Sunday school."

Mammy looked imperious and disapproving. "Dem Bates chillun ain't bad chillun—I ain't sayin' dey is—but who dey gran'pa? Dey ain't nobody in de roun' worl' dat knows, or dat wants to know. Now you's got a gran'pa, an' what yo' gran'pa wuz, you is. An' yo' gran'pa is a gentleman, an' you ought to be a lady. But you ain't gwine to be if you goes an' plays wid de Toms, Dicks an' Harrys in dis here town."

"But, dear Mammy——"

"Now, don't you 'dear Mammy' me. I seen you fishin' wid William Bates yesterday" (no familiarity of nicknames for Mammy), "an' I ain't tell yo' momma yit, but jes' let me ketch you at it agin, dat's all."

The words of Mammy have come painfully and acutely true the last few years. My "gran'pa" died with gout, and several severe attacks have lately laid me low—and at last, after many years, "what my gran'pa wuz, I is."

The Civil War opened my mother's really noble nature, and the last years of her life she was too much of a humanitarian to be exclusive. But Mammy, who lived to be an old woman, never relaxed, and remained a true aristocrat to the end of her days. She had a thorough contempt for people whom she called "half-strainers," and Yankees she could not abide. She used to say: "Dese here Yankees don't understand niggers—dey too polite, an' dey too promisin', an' dey too stingy. A Southern man sing out in de mornin': 'Here, Dick, you old villain, take my breeches and brush 'em, an' clean my shoes,' den he up an' cusses 'cause de shoes don't shine, but he gives Dick two dollars. A Yankee says: 'Please brush my clothes, valet.' Den he takes 'em an' say: 'Thank you, I'm gwine to give you five dollars on Saturday,' an' dat's de last you hear of him. De magnolia an' pomegranate an' jessamine won't grow in no Yankee land. The South is de place for de magnolia blooms, an' for de ole families an' fur niggers."

I shall never forget Mammy's scorn of me upon one occasion, when she asked me who a young cavalry officer who was visiting the house was.

I said, "He's Captain Maynard."

Mammy said: "I know he name—I tuk it often enough at de door—but who is he? Who is his pa an' his gran'pa?"

"Oh, Mammy"—I spoke with impatience—"I don't know, only I've heard that he belongs to one of the old families in Ohio."

Mammy gave a great burst of sardonic laughter, and said: "Honey, dis is something new. I know de Pages,

an' de Nelsons, an' de Dinwiddies, an' de Berkeleys, an' de Duvals, in Virginia—dey's de ole families. I knows de Allstons an' de Pegrams, de Pinkneys an' de Gordons, an' other ole families in South Carolina, an' in Florida an' Louisiana, an' in de South, but dese here ole families in Ohio is bran' new to me. I don't know why you can't keep to yo' kind. Miss Marcia" (my mother) "never knew anybody from Ohio, ole or new. An' all I know 'bout Ohio wuz dat before de war de runaway niggers went dar."

I did not argue—Mammy was too subtle and too persistent for argument—and about people her instinct was almost unerring. She scented the false, the mean, and the meretricious from afar, and her opinions were often veritable prophecies. She was black, and she could read no books. Her horizon was bounded by our very small world. But no statesman could give better, wiser or more far-seeing advice. And in time of sickness, and sorrow, and trouble, there was no heart so tender, so loyal, understanding and true. How often, after the responsibilities and disillusion of life came to me, I would go to Mammy about twilight and say, "Mammy, I'm tired." She understood all there was behind that. "Is you, honey?"—and I was gathered to her broad breast, and there was just silence and comfort—no questions asked, no comments, no advice, no criticisms—just pure and faithful, unquestioning, understanding love. Oh, the infinite rest of it! The peace of it! There is nothing like it in all this weary world now. I am mortally tired. My body is tired—my heart is tired—my very soul is tired. And in some other and better world Mammy knows it, for she sends me oftener and oftener sweet dreams of my childhood, of the far-away South and of her.

CHAPTER III

MY FATHER

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

I THINK the person of all others whom I have loved most in my life was my father. I know I stood spiritually closer to him than I have ever done to any human being. I had a sort of understanding with him as if I were a little corner of his soul. If he came into the house apparently quite collected and cheerful, to all the other members of the family, I recognized instantly a sort of worried undertone in his voice, and I involuntarily slipped my hand in his and gave it a little squeeze of sympathy. Of all the men I have ever seen, he was the most touchingly unselfish. Man is in the main so unconsciously selfish, that there is something deeply pathetic in a manly man with the tenderness, and self-sacrifice, of a woman. Even in quite little things my father always thought first of others. He was extremely fond of vegetables and fruit, but in the early spring, when green peas first appeared on the dinner-table, he always said he preferred peas a little older, so that some one else might have his portion ; or if a great bowl of new figs was brought in, and every one began to eat greedily, he said he preferred figs a little more ripe, and had none at all himself. He could more readily put himself in the place of other people than any man I have ever seen—as the French say, he could "get into the skin" of others. He was a famous divorce lawyer, and as far as I can recollect he never lost a divorce case ; but when people came to him, particularly women, with a long story of

wrongs, and their feelings at the highest tension, he listened sympathetically, and with the greatest patience, and at the end he said : " Yes, this is very melancholy, and I have no doubt you have had a good deal to bear, and very likely you will be able to divorce your husband ; but divorce is not to be entered into any more lightly than matrimony ; and as you have talked a good deal to your friends and your relations, and been advised by various people (I daresay much of it is very good advice), I want you and your husband now to go away into the country, or by the seashore, quite alone and talk over your affairs together without any interference or advice from anybody else for a month. At the end of that time, if you really want a divorce, come back and talk to me about it ; but if there is to be a reconciliation, then, I will help you to set yourself right with your family and friends."

I remember a case of the wife of a colonel in the army. She roused us up at two o'clock one morning in the dripping rain, with a delicate baby in her arms, to say that her husband had beaten her and turned her out of his quarters. At fifteen I was the most chivalrous, sympathetic child possible. Her description of the colonel and his cruel and inhuman conduct, made me blaze with rage. I could not understand my father's coolness and, as I thought, phlegmatic indifference over her outrages, and when she told me that my father had made the proposition of a trip to the country with her husband, I really lost patience with him, and he had not only to listen to the wrongs of the wife from her, but from me ; and to all the innocence, enthusiasm and ignorance of a child, the wrongs were truly heartrending. When she finally retired into the country with this awful blackguard, this monstrous ruffian, I simply wept. However, she did retire. At the end of the month they returned. The young lieutenant (I was too young in those days to know anything about the lieutenant, but there *was* a lieutenant) had been ordered off to another regiment stationed in California. The colonel and his wife were entirely reconciled, and many years afterwards, when he died, I never saw

so much crêpe or such heavy mourning. By that time I had seen a good many colonels' wives, and a good many lieutenants, and I was much less impressed with the mourning than I was with the projected divorce. According to the convenient memory of her sex, and enveloped in velvet blackness from top to toe, she subsequently told me, that no woman in the world had ever had such a devoted husband, and there had never been a difference (I don't suppose she considered a lieutenant a difference) between them. I did not remind her of her flight in the middle of the night from this monster who had become such a saint.

Of all the peacemakers I have ever seen I think my father was the best and greatest. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Not only were many divorces avoided by my father, but family quarrels patched up again and again, friends reconciled, and quarrels mended, by his just and wise advice. In the first place, no one ever talked to him without feeling rested and refreshed. His spirit was so broad and so great that you felt your mental littleness and pettiness drop from you like a mantle, as you sat down in his beautiful, uplifting presence. An old friend of his died, leaving rather a complicated will. He was a very rich man, and had ten children: this led to frequent quarrels in the family, but they all lived together fairly harmoniously until my father was taken very ill. One morning seven of the children and the mother arrived, all of them in a state of mind bordering on insanity. My father was at this time very ill, but he insisted upon being propped up in bed with pillows behind his back, and the eight raging human beings entered this exalted death-chamber. The first words were loud and angry, and I listened with the greatest anxiety outside the door. In half-an-hour one could hear the tones getting lower and more gentle, and the end of it was, they all left the house in tears, quite subdued, and with promises of a better understanding in the future.

My father never had an interested thought for himself,

and his pitiful tenderness for humanity was inexhaustible. He loved his kind with an instinctive sympathy derived from a continual study of that source of all the humanities, Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He was not a very good business man, but his beautiful, brave face at once inspired trust and faith.

After the Civil War, when America was in a perfectly chaotic state, he was in New York, and walking down Broadway he passed once or twice a tall countryman. Finally this man came up and spoke to him, saying : " Excuse me, sir, but I have left the South and have come to New York to make my fortune. I have got the whole of my capital with me—three thousand dollars. Can you tell me how to invest it ? "

" Well, my dear sir," my father said to him, " how is it that you address a total stranger like myself and ask for such an important piece of advice ? "

The man answered : " I have been walking up and down Broadway the whole day looking for an honest man, as soon as I saw you, I knew I had found one."

My father did not tell him how to invest the money, but introduced him to a responsible banker, and the man afterwards established a good business by buying and selling cotton.

There was a very celebrated woman in America, a Mrs Gaines. My father was her lawyer for thirty years. She had a most romantic history. When a young, brilliant, and beautiful girl, she fell in love with a young man who was poor and not desirable : so her father thought, but she insisted upon marrying him, and at last her father flew into a terrible rage and said : " I don't care who you marry, as you are not my daughter."

She asked whose daughter she was, and he said : " The illegitimate daughter of Daniel Clark of Louisiana."

She answered : " I am too honest a woman to be anybody's illegitimate daughter ; from this moment I devote my life to proving my legitimacy. I don't know who Daniel Clark was, but if he was my father, he married my mother ; and

though you have been my father for nineteen years you shall not reproach me with what is not true."

She did establish her legitimacy, and she was heir to perhaps the greatest fortune in America, but, according to our national law, her property, having been "squatted upon," had really passed into other hands, consequently innumerable and incessant law-suits were necessary in order to get hold of the many millions. *En secondes nocces* she married General Gaines, and the fortunes of the first and second husband were both swallowed up in enormous law-suits. She read law herself, and was a very intelligent woman, a brilliant conversationalist, but absolutely with one idea, as she never thought or spoke of anything else than her one great interest. When my father died she paid him a magnificent tribute, after thirty years of the closest association with him, and having become suspicious of human nature through very many experiences. She said to me: "Your father Judge Paschal never thought, or said, or did a mean thing in the whole of his life."

CHAPTER IV

MY TERRIBLE SECRET

I REMEMBER the first secret that I ever had from my father. Oh, how hideously, how terribly it weighed upon my conscience—the tender conscience of five! Mammy used to tell me a great deal about the wrongs of the negroes and about the Abolitionists, who were looked upon as the very scum of the earth in the South, and were often lynched. I had great sympathy with the slaves; I seemed to have been born to think slavery an abomination, and gradually I became an Abolitionist. It was such an awful thing that I could take only Mammy into my confidence.

I recollect when I was six years old going into the kitchen early one morning and saying to her: "Mammy, I have got something to tell you. It will be an awful thing for the family when it is known—perhaps I shall have to go away for always. I am an Abolitionist!"

Mammy said: "Oh, lots of niggers are mighty well off, I can tell you—all Miss Marcia's niggers are anyhow. I don't think, if I wuz in your place, I would be an Abolitionist."

"But," I said, "Mammy, I *am*—I am an Abolitionist."

Then slowly I began to prepare my father for this horrible revelation. I said to him: "Pappy, I have got something to tell you about myself, so awful that I can't be your little girl."

He looked rather amused: "Oh, I don't think that is possible."

"But," I insisted, "it *is*. You don't know what it is—

it is something so terrible that I can't tell you to-day—I must have a few days more."

He did not press me. I was rather sorry for that, so again I asked him: "If I had to go away from home for ever could I take Mammy with me?"

He said: "Well, it depends upon where you are going."

I replied: "I'm afraid I will have to go. You say I should never have a secret from you, but I have got a most awful, awful secret—I don't suppose any child ever had such a secret before."

Again he repressed his curiosity and I deferred my revelation. Finally one day I climbed upon his knee, put my arms round his neck, and said: "Now, I am going to hold you tight while I tell you something, because it may be the last time that you will ever want me on your lap. I am something that you think is awful, but I know it is right, and you have always told me that I was to be brave and have courage, and if I thought a thing was right I was to stand by it."

He tenderly stroked my hair, saying, "Well, now I am thoroughly prepared; you have been talking to me for some time, and I shall have courage for whatever revelation you make to me."

I slipped from my knee, and stood up, held my breath for a moment, and then gasped out: "I am an Abolitionist!"

I shall never forget the shame and anguish that I suffered when he laughed more heartily than I had ever heard him laugh before. To think that I had gone through weeks of agony and genuine mental suffering, and my well-thought-out, martyr-like principle was to be treated with levity! I was thoroughly angry and disgusted, but somewhat relieved at the same time, as it seemed to make no difference whatever in my father's affection for me.

Just after this I had an opportunity of putting my principle into practice. My father had bought a negro from the rice plantation who was more like an animal than anything I have ever seen. He had been brought up in a little cabin; he had never seen a carpet, or a pair of andirons, or a table,

or in fact anything that belongs to civilization. He had simply worked on a river plantation, had corn-bread and bacon for food, and slept on a blanket in a little cabin at night. The miasma of the low-lying river bed would have killed a white man, but he was an enormous fellow—about six feet high, and as black as coal, gay and always laughing, his big mouth was filled with splendid rows of white teeth, and he had a fascinating store of animal tales. We instantly became great friends, and he could carry me round the place by the hour on his back without being tired, and he was always ready to put the saddle on my pony or to mend my whips or to do anything to please me, but he was extremely idle, and impertinent to my father. One day I was sitting on the end of a waggon, and he was standing by, as usual laughing. My father came up and said: “Eli, have you been down in the cornfield to-day? I told you to go this morning at five o’clock.”

“No, sir,” he said, “I didn’t go.”

“Damn it all! Do you dare to disobey me?” said my father, raising his hand to give him a blow.

Just then I leaped off the end of the waggon on to Eli’s neck, and the blow—a hard one—descended with such force on my head that I was rendered quite blind and dazed for a moment, and my nose began to bleed, but as the blow was not intended for me I uttered no cry. My father was in a terrible state of mind; he asked my forgiveness, and said: “I tell you what I’ll do: I promise you as long as I live I will never strike another negro.” And he never did.

A man lived opposite to us who was extremely cruel to his slaves; he seemed to take a perfect delight in giving a negro a beating, and he selected the lovely sunny days to do it in, when the cries could be well carried through the clear and ambient air. With the first blow and the first cry I began: “Oh, pappy, please go and ask Mr Young not to go on beating that negro. Oh, please! Oh, please!” The louder *her* cries, the louder became *mine*, and the tears rolled down my cheeks as I begged: “Oh, I can’t bear it—I can’t bear it!” It was just as if we were trying who

could cry the loudest, the woman who was being whipped or myself. It was inadmissible in the South for one man to interfere with another man's slaves ; but finally in desperation my father would rush over to Mr Young, and I can hear him still with his angry voice : " Good God, Young, for heaven's sake drop that whip ! You are not only killing your darkie, but you are killing my child—she is now in a nervous spasm. Why the devil can't you manage your servants without continually thrashing them ? "

Mr Young finally became so angry that he sent my father a challenge to a duel, which was instantly accepted, as my father had been brought up to the duelling system. He was a splendid pistol shot : it was said that once he shot a wild beast at night under the house simply by firing between the two brilliant eyes. (The houses in the South are raised from the ground, for additional coolness probably.) As Mr Young was a very bad shot, his second came to my father and the matter was arranged without blood being spilled, and after that he was more considerate to his negroes.

I thought then, and I think now, that unlimited power is one of the most terrible things in the world. The power of one man to strike another man without his being able to strike back, but simply to stand like a dumb animal and take the blow, is an abomination in the sight of the just.

CHAPTER V

IN TRUTH LIES FREEDOM

“No man is free until he has been divorced from public favour.”—ELBERT HUBBARD

ABOUT this time an uncle of mine wanted to go abroad. He wrote to my father and asked if he would take charge of his negroes—he had a plantation of about five hundred slaves. My father answered No, it was impossible ; he was too much occupied with his law cases. However, Uncle Marcellus was a man who did whatever he wanted to do. and one morning we awoke to find the place literally swarming with negroes ; nearly the whole number had been sent down for my father to take charge of, while Uncle Marcellus made a two years' tour in Europe.

In a very short time they were all hired out, and one of them, Sally—a fat, black, lazy, sweet-tempered creature—was taken as a useful maid to some young Duval cousins of mine. Sally had quite as good a collection of negro stories as Uncle Remus—of which “Brer Rabbit” and the “Tar Baby” were the first favourites—and night after night we listened to her tales and her songs. I can hear her chanting “De Jay Bird” yet :

“De jay bird he lived on de fork eyed dear—
Jang—my long go hay—
An' de blue bird lived a neighbour near
An' he sot one day on de top of de sawpit,
An' he saw de jay bird co'tin' de tomtit—
Jang—my long go hay.





I AM AN ABOLITIONIST!

An' de blue bird he ripped, an' de blue bird swore
Dat he nebber had saw sich fun before.
Said de jay bird—" Blue coat, you be done
An' stop dat way of pokin' fun."
But de blue bird he kep' on a-lafin' still,
Said de jay bird : " Go it—have your fill."
Den de jay bird he co'ted de blue bird's sister,
An' he flew to de paw-paw bush an' he kissed her.
Den de blue bird he ripped an' de blue bird tore
An' said he nebber was so mad before.
Den de jay bird he 'loped wid de blue bird's wife,
An' it almos' took dat bluebird's life,
An' he fluttered about an' he could not res'
Till he took an' destroyed dat jay bird's nes'.
Den all de birds from de crow to de wren
Poked dey fun at de blue bird den,
An' he moved away to de Arkansaw,
But de jay bird still stuck in he crow
An' he died one day of de melancholy
Because he had committed de folly
Of laughing at de jay bird an' de tomtit
As dey sat one day on de top of de sawpit.
An' he wiped his bill, an' he writ his will,
An' his will is in dat fam'ly still.
An' he lef' his chillun dis beques' :
Nebber to fool wid a jay bird nes'."

How we loved the line : " He wiped his bill, an' he writ his will " ! But Sally was not much good for anything but story telling, so Uncle Tom bought a useful maid who could sew neatly, and Sally was hired out to a Mrs Birrell. Mrs Birrell was a tall, angular, hard-featured Yankee from Connecticut. Though the people of the North were all against slavery, they often made much the more cruel and tyrannical masters and mistresses of the negroes.

Nothing was heard of Sally for some time, when one day about one o'clock (this was almost at the close of the war) she appeared, seemingly very ill—I cannot say pale, as she was as black as the ace of spades—but she looked decidedly ashen. She said to my mother : " Miss Marcia, I have runned away from Mrs Birrell because I can't stand it any longer."

My mother answered, " Well, Sally, I'll send a note to the Judge. Take it to his office and see what he can do for you."

She replied, " Miss Marcia, I can't walk another step. I just want to show you something."

With this she raised up her one garment—a cotton dress—and showed her back to my mother, and my mother, who was a woman with strong nerves, instantly fainted. From Sally's shoulders to her heels she had literally been flayed alive. I was told afterwards there was scarcely an inch of skin on her whole body ; and not only that : the woman had rubbed salt all over the raw flesh !

We sent for the family doctor, and he thought it was impossible for Sally to live ; but my mother, who had undaunted courage and undaunted kindness, said it would be too great a satisfaction to Mrs Birrell to have her die, and that she herself would nurse her. The finest linen sheets in the house were taken out of a fragrant cupboard, and the nursing began. It was impossible for Sally to wear a nightgown ; she was covered with salves, ointments and old linen, and rolled up in a linen sheet, and fanned all day long. After six weeks of hard, never-ending work, with relays of nurses—I can remember my dear father coming home tired from his office, and sitting down with a palm-leaf fan, and fanning Sally by the hour, to be relieved by my mother, or one of my cousins or the cooks or housemaids—and by constantly being kept cool and looked after night and day, she was finally out of danger. My father brought a suit against Mrs Birrell, for persistent cruelty, but only got the price of the doctors' bills.

There was a negro whipper in town, a Mr Marsh, who was thin and tall, and the children ran from him as if he were a leper ; and although people sent him servants for five, or ten, or twenty, or thirty lashes, as the case might be, Mr Marsh was held in great contempt by the whole town, was absolutely friendless, and was always called the negro whipper. To me he seemed a sort of vampire, and whenever I saw him I turned my head away as quickly as possible—and once I

forgot the ladylike teachings of my Mammy, and as I passed by I spat upon him.

We had a negro man who belonged to my brother ; he was called William, and was a very clever man indeed ; after the war, he made quite a fortune by patents. He could play the violin admirably, he was a splendid carpenter, could mend anything that was broken—a waggon, or a window, or a door—but he was very insubordinate and impudent, so I was told. He belonged to my eldest brother—not to my father. He had done something, I don't know what, and I heard my brother say one day to the manager of the place, " Take William up to Marsh to-morrow and tell him to give him twenty lashes."

I went to sleep with that horrible speech echoing in my ears. Twenty lashes ! Twenty lashes ! William, who was always so kind to me, and who played such pretty, gay tunes on the violin, and who was so tall and good-looking and proud—William was to have his spirit broken, his shirt taken off, and on his bare back old Marsh was to administer twenty lashes ! No ; I made up my mind that it should not happen—if I had to die for it.

Early the next morning, about five o'clock, I woke up and I said to my Mammy, " Mammy, William is to be whipped to-day, but he sha'n't be whipped if I scream myself to death for it."

As soon as Mammy dressed me, I ran to the garden and stationed myself by William's side. When the manager came and said, " William, I am going to take you up to town," I gave one scream, a perfectly ear-piercing scream, followed by another. My father ran out of the house, thinking that I was being mortally hurt, and my mother ran after him, only to find that my brother had given orders for William to be whipped. I would not stop screaming for a moment ; then I began to tremble and grow white, but still held on to William, who was dumb. My father turned to my mother, saying, " Good God, this child is going to drive us all mad about these negroes." Then he turned to the manager and said, " Go and tell your Marse George

that Betty won't let William be whipped, and, damn it all, I won't either."

I was the thinnest wraith who has ever been seen, because my mind and my imagination were being continually drawn upon ; and when I see fat, stolid English children, who can eat and sleep and live a simple unimaginative existence, I do envy them their natural, healthy lives—no anxieties and no responsibilities, while mine began, alas ! almost at my birth.

My father, according to other members of the family, spoiled me terribly. Every night after I went to bed he always told me a story, kissed me good-night, and held my hand until I went to sleep. And I have been told that he gave up many dinner parties for this reason, and would always leave his own for a short interval, saying, " Pray excuse me, but I always tell my little daughter a story before she goes to sleep. I will return in a few moments."

The stories were of many and various sorts. I preferred "The Arabian Nights" (shortened and simplified) to them all. But I loved above everything true stories, and I always breathed a sigh of satisfaction if my father convincingly said, " That's a true story." Even in my babyhood I had a passion for truth. Can a woman be born into the world with a more tragic desire ? From men especially she gets it so rarely, and yet of all things it is the most tonic, and the most healthy. In truth lies freedom of spirit and freedom of mind.

CHAPTER VI

ELEMENTAL ME

“ Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me ; I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.”

SHAKESPEARE

I REMEMBER one night when I was about four years old, I had a fever. It was a very warm night in the summer time, and in my little thin nightgown I turned and twisted on my father's serge lap, and complained so much, and insisted so despotically on my own way that he was finally induced to take off his woollen trousers. His linen drawers were cooler, and we sat quite peacefully afterward, he attired in black coat, waistcoat and drawers, when my mother and the old family doctor made their appearance. My mother, who was very prim, was horrified at my father's attire, but he explained that it was my command, and my necessity, as I was ill. As they went out of the room I heard the doctor say to my mother : “ The Judge is preparing himself for the fate of Lear, and Betty will be a second Goneril.”

I insisted then and there on the story of Lear, and we both scouted the baleful prophecy of the future. This was my first introduction to Shakespeare. My first successful rebellion was shortly after this episode. Whenever the doctor was called in for any childish ill, he always gave one remedy—rhubarb and jalap. Oh, the black, sticky nastiness of it ! To this day the odour even of rhubarb makes me feel faint.

One day when the doctor was sent for, I suddenly made up my small, unbendable, martyr-like mind not to take the rhubarb and jalap. When he felt my pulse and looked at my tongue and ordered the usual prescription I was prepared, and calmly announced my unalterable decision never to take rhubarb and jalap again. My father was grieved; my mother was angry; the doctor was stern—so was I. The doctor then advised my mother and father to leave the room while he administered the potion. He sat down on a chair, seized me, put me on a small stool, and held my head between his knees. I sat quite still, with hands and teeth both clenched hard together. I have always had good muscular strength, and my little jaws never opened, so the doctor emptied spoonful after spoonful of jalap over my apron and hair. My gums bled profusely from the hard pressure of the wandering spoon, but the jaws and the spirit remained strong and locked like a vice. Finally my father, alarmed at the unexpected silence, rushed in, and, finding my hair clotted with jalap and my face as pale as death and stained with blood and medicine, picked me up in his arms, saying to the doctor, “Good heavens, are you killing the child, Dr Baker?” It was then, and only then, that I wept out my insubordinate and passionate soul. My father understood. He always understood. And jalap was never mentioned in the house again.

Another memory of my childhood, and a happier one, was of a wonderful Christmas tree in the church, for all the Sunday school scholars, with the curate, an amiable albino, dressed as Santa Claus. It was a big cedar-tree, with a rich spicy odour from the cedar brake, full of purple cedar berries, and lighted with myriads of pink candles. It was hung with beautiful toys all direct from Germany, but the toy that filled my soul with delight,⁵ joy, envy and apprehension was a parrot. What would I do if any other child got that parrot? I felt that I would die. Having seen the parrot with its gorgeous red and green, colouring its fine tail, and fresh kid base that promised a sonorous squeak, life without it would, I knew, be worthless and unlivable. My long-

ings even now, though I am a grandmother, are keen. As a child, when I wanted anything, my little soul was a flame of desire. Those are the beings born into the world to suffer above all others. Fate loves to punish them; she has given them keen longings, keen joys and keen agonies. They are the people who never do anything by halves—the elemental ones, whose emotions are stormy and turbulent, or joyous, but always deep and definite. And as I gazed at that parrot, even at the tender age of four, my life presented one long grey blank without him. Santa Claus began to distribute the toys. The tree was robbed of dolls, and Noah's arks, and horses, and carts, and kites, and drums, and flutes, and engines, and trumpets—and then a hand took down the parrot. I shut my eyes tight, and held my breath, for I could not have witnessed another child's possession of that irrationally loved bird without a cry of agony. But Fate on one of the few occasions of my life smiled on me that night. I felt something placed in my arms, I smelt the adorable scent of toy paint, more agreeable to the nostrils of a child than all the mingled perfumes of Araby. I opened my eyes. I breathed again, the blood flowed back to my little heart. The parrot, the beautiful, the many-coloured, the longed-for, the well-desired parrot, was mine. That was an hour of perfect bliss.

Not so many years ago something of the same sort happened to me in London. Buffalo Bill had his big show here, and undertook to teach my son riding. Toodie (my boy) was only fifteen then, and provided with the longest gloves and the biggest sombrero, and the most brilliant shirt of all the cowboys, he was given a kicking broncho, and told to ride. Being an anxious mother, I was frequently at the show and often in Colonel Cody's quarters. Hanging on the wall of his sitting-room was a charming water-colour that I wanted almost as badly as the parrot. It represented a brilliant summer day, a stretch of wild prairie (probably Texas), and sitting immovable, on an immovable mustang pony, an Indian chief in all the bravery of his war paint, his proud head prouder with feathers, and his hand held lightly over

his eyes to shade them from the blinding sun. Evidently he was looking for and scenting some distant, unseen, but instinctively felt enemy. The subject appealed to me, and I loved the picture and wanted it badly. But Buffalo Bill did not know this, and one day the show was over, and packed, and gone away.

Two days after its departure a coloured servant appeared and brought me the envied water-colour with Colonel Cody's compliments. He had left it for me. And if ever I have a home again (oh, the dear heart-breaking word !) I will hang that Indian brave the first of all my pictures.

Heredity is much stronger than we realize, and its identical forces march along the same lines, in spite of the leavening of many generations. Zélie de Lussan, that gifted singer and actress, says she has never known a more decided Frenchwoman in thought, in feeling, in sentiment, and in taste, than myself. And yet for generations I am an American. But my French blood reasserts itself, and I easily comprehend the exalted desperation which sent the men and women of France quite gaily to the guillotine. I have experienced this feeling more than once in my life. There is no other emotion akin to it. The soul seems quite detached from the body ; it leaps forth like a sword from the scabbard. It is a monstrous flame blazing to the sky. It is the pure spirit freed by an overmastering emotion from the dragging flesh. And this feeling came to me first as a child through my father. He was a Union man, a convinced constitutional lawyer. He believed in the United States of America as a great, magnificent and undivided whole. And though he had the greatest love of his people, and was a Southern man by ancestry and sentiment, he always remained true to the constitution and to the Union, although he lived in Texas, a state unanimous in its adherence to the Confederacy.

Toward the end of the war, when the Confederacy was nearing its end, a small party of fanatics decided, as an example to others, to hang my father, who was the leader of the Union men of the state. One day my mother was on the balcony attending to her flowers. I was in the garden

playing. An uncle of mine suddenly appeared unannounced and spoke to her hurriedly. My mother turned deadly pale, put her hand to her side, and my uncle supported her to a chair and called to a maid for a glass of water. I ran to her, calling out, "Oh, mamma, what's the matter?" She exclaimed, "Your father has been arrested and put in gaol for his opinions, as a Union man and an honourable gentleman. But he will soon be out. Be a good little girl and don't cry."

Uncle Matthew, who was clerk of the court, then said, "Marcia, I've arranged for the Judge's dinner to be sent to him. Will you order the carriage and one of the servants to take it?"

And "Oh, mamma," I began to beg, "let me go with Mammy too, do let me go, do, do." And I begged and cried with such vehemence that I was finally lifted in the carriage and sent off with Mammy.

The gaol was overflowing with prisoners, for Texas was a rough country in those days. Murderers, thieves, deserters from the army were all crowded into one room. They were dirty, unkempt, desperate, hard-looking men, some of them with the faces of ravening beasts—and my father with his thick thatch of silver hair, fine features, close-shaven, benevolent face, noble bearing, spotless linen and fine broadcloth clothes, looked a veritable king among them. He was sitting quite quietly and undisturbed, reading, perhaps for the fiftieth time, "The Bride of Lammermoor." He had taken it from the table in his office, and slipped it in his pocket while being arrested. It is for this sweet reason I feel as if Sir Walter Scott were a kinsman of mine, and that Scotland is so close to my heart. It is impossible for the old world to know the many and tender bonds between it and the new. Some day, though God forbid, if a war is declared between England and another power, the United Empire will, if need be, discover our unforgotten love and loyalty to the country of our ancestors.

CHAPTER VII

MY FATHER IN PRISON

“Life is a battle, and the successful soldier is he who wields the sword of Knowledge and trembles not at the threatenings of Ignorance.”

MY beloved father in gaol! For a moment I was blind with rage and terror, then I hurled myself at him like a small catapult, gripped him around the neck and began to cry, woman fashion, saying, “Oh, do whatever they want you to do—only come home with me, come home with your little daughter.”

He soothed me and talked to me, until I felt, as I always did in his presence, calm, and quiet, and reasonable, even though I, too, was in gaol. A rough red-faced soldier sitting on the floor in the room said to me, “Little girl, what would you do if your father was a hundred miles away?” I drew very close to pappy, with the horrible idea making me quite cold. Years afterwards when I had almost forgotten the existence of this soldier, he wrote me a letter on my father’s death to say that he had never forgotten that tragic night nor the strong love between us, and that he was very sorry for me.

The night of my father’s arrest, my mother, Aunt Polly Hynes, a young lady and myself were sitting in my mother’s room, when it seemed to me I heard at a great distance a trampling of many feet. My ears were as keen in hearing as the ears of a Red Indian, and at once my little figure was alert and at attention. Standing up, I gasped out the words “Pappy! Pappy!” The others heard nothing, but in a short time the room was filled with a number of



"SHE IS ALONE THE ARABIAN BIRD."

masked men, armed and terrible-looking, who surrounded my father. He said to my mother, "Marcia, these men are taking me away, God knows where; give me some money and pack my clothes as soon as you can. If they murder me I will leave my sons to avenge my death." (Both my brothers were away, soldiers in the Union Army.)

My mother, suddenly looking quite old and white, began to pack a bag, and one of the men called out, "Hurry up, madam. No trifling—do not keep us waiting."

We had a number of negroes on the place all loyal to my father, and we always had firearms, as we lived in the country. The negroes rushed in at this moment, carrying guns, and the coachman asked, "Shall we shoot, Judge?" My father seemed to consider for a moment—he did not expect to live an hour after leaving the house—and then replied, "No, let there be no bloodshed—put down your rifles."

The negroes marched slowly out, but all the fearsome tension of the atmosphere was communicated to me. My little soul leaped to flame, and the white heat of exalted detachment separated spirit from flesh, making the impossible possible. I rushed toward one of the horrible black masks, and screamed out, "Are you going to hang my pappy?" The man put out his arm to ward me off. I seized the soft part of the palm of his hand in my strong, sharp little teeth, biting a piece of flesh almost out of the hand—I tore the mask from his face, scratching his cheeks, and dragging at his shirt collar with all my strength. He swore at me, saying, "Hell and damnation! Take this little devil away!" Two soldiers seized me, and carried me to the other end of the room, but I left him a perfect wreck, blood streaming from his wounded hand, collar torn apart, and his mask on the floor. He was really only a mild and servile little shopkeeper in the town, who belonged to the militia, and who had been given a disagreeable duty to perform. When I grew up and came back from boarding school, although he carried a scar on his hand he served me many a time quite amiably from his excellent shop.

My father was carried a hundred miles away to be tried

by a court martial, but it was practically the end of the war, so they thought it better to release him and send him home without a trial—and after days and nights of a horrible, heart-eating anxiety he arrived at midnight. My mother almost died with joy, and I awakened from a sound sleep and thought it must be a blissful dream until he spoke to me.

When I grew up and the family reproached my father with spoiling me, saying, "If Betty told you that white was black you would agree to it," he would place his hand tenderly on mine and answer gently, "Well, you see, she's the only one of my children who has ever fought for me." Fought for him! Oh, how willingly I would have died for him, then or at any moment of my life afterwards.

I was a very fearless child. The dark held no terrors whatever for me, and all animals I looked upon as my own particular friends and trusted companions. My father had an old race horse, an extraordinarily intelligent animal called "Pomp." He had retired from the race-course, and indeed from all work, and led a lazy, luxurious existence, as a reward for his past prowess. He would not let anyone come within a yard of his heels without kicking out, most viciously, and the little negroes of the place were all dreadfully afraid of him. One morning, when I was about three years of age, I could be found nowhere. My father finally looked in the stable and saw Pomp standing quite still, with both my arms clasped tightly around his wicked hind leg; but he spared me, and turned his intelligent old head and, my father said, actually winked at him. I have always loved horses! When I was two years old, my father had a Mexican saddle made with a pommel about the size of a large dinner plate, and I rode in front of him on this little seat, until I was big enough to have a saddle, and pony, of my own. And there was a time in my life when I could ride without any saddle at all, but just catch a horse by his mane, and jump on his bare back, and ride gaily away. I used to love the danger of riding a wicked horse, something that had to be blindfolded while I got on, and then would leap away like a wild thing, and I have been thrown dozens of times, but never seriously

hurt. One summer I got hold of one of the most foolish, senseless horses I have ever seen. He shied at everything, and would jump clear across the road, at a wind-blown ball of leaves. And when I was taken suddenly ill, and the groom heard it, he said: "Thank de good Lord for dat, if Miss Betty had a kep on ridin' dat Bob Lee, dey would sholy bin a corpse or a cripple befo de summer was out."

I was not only fond of horses, but of every living animal, and as a child spent far more time on them than on my spelling-book, and never forgot any need of theirs—food, or water, or medicine, if necessary.

Mammy got me rather a good breed of game chickens, and one little chick who lost its mother was brought up in the kitchen and became as tame and intimate as a dog. He had the greatest interest in my teeth, pecking at them with vigour, and finding them solid, he would turn a red eye slowly on them for a few moments, conclude he had made a mistake, and that with greater energy they could be dislodged, and begin vigorously pecking again. One day my two grown brothers discovered his worth and engaged him in a cock fight. I found him in the evening all bedraggled, his beautiful feathers clotted with blood, and one bright eye swollen and closed. That night when I said my prayers to my father the names of my brothers were omitted. After the "Amen" my father inquired, "Why haven't you asked God to bless your brothers?" "Because," I answered, "they have been fighting my chickens, and my cocks are all hurt, and blood is on their feathers. I don't want God to bless them." "But," said my father, "you cannot be a little Christian until you ask God to bless your brothers." So after various arguments I was induced to kneel down, and said, "Oh, God, bless my brothers" (a pause) "but pray don't do it on my account." Even at a very early age my mind was a logical one. I loved my chickens, therefore why love their destroyers? And even yet, after years of an older and steadier civilization, the utmost that I can do is not to loathe my enemies—to love them as myself is quite beyond me. All human beings are products of their native soil.

Texas is a country of wild storms and great tornadoes. Nature there is oftentimes in her most savage mood. The dusty road-bed of a river to-day, is the angry and raging torrent of to-morrow, sweeping everything before it. It is said of the native Texan like myself that if he loves you he loves you all over ; if he doesn't, he would just as soon make you cold as not. I do so truly love my friends—their ways, their eyes, their hands, their voices, their little peculiarities. As for my enemies—well . . .

CHAPTER VIII

MY FIRST APPEARANCE ON ANY STAGE

“ Four ducks on a pond,
A green bank beyond ;
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing :
What a little thing
To remember for years,
To remember with tears ! ”

W. ALLINGHAM

A TRAVELLING menagerie came to Austin soon after my Mammy was restored to me, and I heard much talk of the lions, tigers, elephants, zebras, etc. The calvacade passed just in front of our house—splendid knights in gold, scarlet, orange and green, ladies on snow-white horses in long velvet riding habits, hats with sweeping feathers, and lovely saddlecloths rich in the glitter of spangles. And then after this—agony of agonies !—my mother said I was too little to go to the circus. I held the opposite opinion, but she would not relent, therefore I decided to take the matter into my own hands.

There was the question of money, but this did not in the least trouble me. The next day, after Mammy had made me smart for the afternoon in muslin, lace, corals and blue ribbons, as soon as her back was turned I trotted briskly off in the direction of the shining tents. On arriving there I asked the man at the door if I could go in, and he inquired who I was. I drew myself up and said I was Betty Paschal, and he smiled and lifted the curtain of the tent and said he reckoned Betty Paschal would have to go in, and I found myself alone, but not a bit afraid. I walked around, and stood all admiration before the array of living curiosities—

the Fat Woman, the Living Skeleton, the Snake Charmer, the Knife Swallow, and the Tattooed Man. The Fat Woman, a girl of about twenty, was lovely—I gazed at her with eyes distended by admiration; she was dressed in a white flowered muslin, a pink sash, wide pink kid slippers, and, like the old song, she wore a wreath of roses. Her hair was a pretty nut-brown, her eyes were the same colour, she had dimples and a wide fresh mouth filled with white teeth. Her lips parted in a smile and the dimples deepened when she saw me, and she said to one of the attendants, “ Say, is that little girl all by herself ? ” He said I was, and she told him to lift me up and place me on her knees. What a roomy, capacious seat it was ! The Living Skeleton provided me with long sticks of red and white striped candy, the Tattooed Man chucked me under the chin, and there I sat, adorably happy, when an anxious clamour arose outside, followed by the appearance of—my father, my mother, and Mammy. I wept when I left the Fat Lady, and we parted with many embraces—and the joy at my recovery was too great for any reproaches to follow. Sawdust to this day has an agreeable odour in my nostrils—it is connected with my first appearance on any stage.

When I was five years old my father had spent three thousand dollars on toys for me. How rich I should be with that amount of money now ! And beside playthings of every imaginable kind, there were innumerable dolls—white and black, large and small, of wax, of china, and of alabaster. I loved them all, but my heart’s favourite was a large wax doll christened “ Mary Llewellyn,” and lovingly shortened to “ Mary Lou.” I had kissed Mary Lou’s once ruddy cheeks pale, and her once scarlet lips to anæmic pink, her abundant curls were worn away, and her hair was as short as a boy’s, but her black eyes still sparkled. Her body was large and comfortable, and when she was in my arms I felt as though I were holding something solid, and her arms, and hands, and feet, were soft kid. The other dolls were laid in neat rows in their beds at night, but Mary Lou in a ruffled nightgown always slept with me, and to her I confided every

secret and aspiration of my life. Every day I gave her a nice dinner on a little pewter plate, and every morning a thimbleful of coffee in a tiny pewter cup. Mammy made her a delicious cake for her birthday, which I was obliged to eat for her—and Mary Lou was my inseparable companion; even when I rode on the big flat pommel of the Mexican saddle in front of my father, Mary Lou was gathered in my arms and rode too. Her clothes went to the wash with mine, and we wore the same coloured sashes and hair ribbons. And when I was ill of a fever for a fortnight, Mary Lou lay cradled in the hollow of my arm, and never left me for a moment, night or day.

About Christmas time Mary Lou and I were constantly sent out of the sitting-room. My mother told me that Santa Claus was going to give me a wonderful Christmas, and asked what he should bring me. I said a new dress and new shoes for Mary Lou.

Christmas morning I was awakened by the servants all calling out "Christmas gift! Christmas gift!" I put out my hand for Mary Lou. She was gone! "Mary Lou," I cried, in great anxiety, "Oh, darling, where are you?"

My mother caught me up, wrapped a shawl about me, saying, "It's all right," and carried me to the fireplace, where a wood fire sparkled and roared, and there set out were all my wonderful toys. The best cabinetmaker in Austin had been employed to make a little walnut bedstead with a carved head board, a real mattress, bolster and pillows, and Aunt Polly Hynes and my mother had sewn little embroidered linen pillow-cases and sheets, ribbon-bound blankets, and a satin coverlet. There was a little dressing-table with a pretty oval looking-glass bound in brass, a rocking chair, a washstand, with a bowl and jug of fine china, and in the rocking-chair a large new beautiful wax doll, who could open and shut her eyes and say "Mama—Papa." Her fair golden hair hung to her waist, her ruby lips were parted in a smile, disclosing four little white teeth. The best (described by Aunt Polly Hynes as) "mantua-maker" (such a dear old word) had made her frock, which

was of stiff blue satin softened with blonde lace, and her hat was of shirred white velvet trimmed in bunches of little gold grapes and a blue feather. Her lingerie was of the most exquisite, and she wore open-work socks and blue shoes, while by her side stood a little blue silk parasol, and in her lap was a tiny bouquet of roses. But none of this elegance gave me any pleasure, and even at the age of four I delighted in beauty and daintiness, for—horror of horrors!—sitting on the floor at the feet of this beautiful intruder, in a stiffly starched pink calico frock, white apron and white cap, degraded from her high estate into a lady's maid, was my best beloved child, Mary Lou! Her eyes seemed to me full of sadness and reproach.

"Mary Lou, oh, Mary Lou," I cried, "I didn't do it! Your mother didn't do it! I love you the best. Oh, Mary Lou, I'm so sorry!" And all the time I was undressing her with trembling fingers, and then I tore the clothes off the intruder and gave them to Mary Lou. The hat wasn't a bit becoming, but she wore it. Only the blue shoes were left to the intruder—they were too small for Mary Lou's ample feet.

My mother was grievously disappointed. There was I, on Christmas morning, after all her work and trouble, in a passion of tears. I remember her plaintively complaining to my father that I was "such an odd child," and he said very tenderly, "Forgive her, Marcia. She will suffer enough pain through that faithful heart of hers."

How sad he would have been if he had known how much!

CHAPTER IX

AUNT MARY THE ANGEL

“ Oh ! friends regretted, scenes for ever dear,
Remembrance hails you with her warmest tear !
Drooping, she bends o’er pensive Fancy’s urn,
To trace the hours which never can return.”

BYRON

I MUST not forget one of the cruellest disappointments of my childhood. My aunt Mary (Mrs Matthew Hayes) was an angel upon earth, a real, veritable angel dropped from heaven by accident. She had married, very young, a Dr Atkinson, who was extremely handsome, a splendid dancer, a bold rider, the possessor of a good baritone voice, great charm of manner, and very popular. Consequently he was in great demand socially, and Aunt Mary led a lonely life. A few years after their marriage he died, and left her a widow with one beautiful little girl, Ellen Atkinson, who inherited all her father’s great charm and good looks. What lovely arch blue eyes she had, with dainty pencilled black eyebrows, and the most winning ways. I adored her as a child : to go and see Cousin Ellen was one of my greatest treats.

After Dr Atkinson’s death Aunt Mary announced to the family that if she married again it would be the ugliest man she could find, and one day in Galveston she came back to my mother and said, “ Marcia, I’ve seen the man—I met him on the street to-day, and he is ugly enough to suit even me, and I’m sure he can’t sing.”

This bit of nonsense proved to be prophetic. She married the man, and he was undoubtedly plain, but he had one of

the most musical speaking voices I have ever heard, and in spite of his ill assorted features he looked what he was—a distinguished gentleman. He adored Aunt Mary as a saint in a niche, and little Ellen was as dear to him as his own children—there were five in family, three boys and two girls. Aunt Mary had an undestroyably happy and cheerful disposition and a lovely sweet face. My mother used to call it a “how-de-do face.” One of the stories told of her was, that in a shop a man was trying on a coat, and he observed Aunt Mary’s look of solicitous interest, and turned to her saying, “Madam, excuse me, but my wife could not accompany me to-day—will you look and see how this coat fits in the back?”

Such a thing as a trained nurse was unknown to Austin in those days, and we were not scientific or careful, so typhoid and other fevers were constantly occurring, and Aunt Mary was continually sent for, to nurse the sick. She would arrange her household affairs and go for two or three days, sitting night and day with the patient. Uncle Matthew used to make a protest, but there was nobody like Mrs Hayes. If anybody died a carriage was at once sent for Mrs Hayes to comfort the afflicted family. If there was a bazaar Aunt Mary’s busy clever hands made half the objects for the stalls. She could embroider beautifully, she was an exquisite needlewoman, and she had a wonderfully artistic sense of colour. She could trim hats and design dresses, and she was a good cook—and of course never idle for one single moment of her busy, unselfish life. Novels she loved and devoured. Her one recreation was reading whenever she could find the time.

Like my grandfather, Governor Duval, Aunt Mary was the very soul of hospitality. The Atkinson house was an odd rambling bungalow sort of affair, with a great number of rooms. Whenever Uncle Matthew could afford it he built an additional room—it made no difference how the room lay—sometimes it was not connected with the main house at all, but joined on by a covered archway. And rooms were always occupied by Aunt Mary’s kinfolds and the boys’

friends and the girls' friends, and "the weak-hearted and the afflicted," for being near Aunt Mary was like being bathed in sunshine. I have never seen such a persistently optimistic nature as hers. Hope radiated from her eyes, and her lips were always ready to curve into a smile and to speak words of cheerful comfort. Of course Fate bore down upon her radiance with a malice and a cruelty rarely equalled.

I remember when my baby was a few months old I went to Texas to spend the summer, and we occupied a sort of wing connected with the main house by a little covered way, one of the latest developments of the bungalow. All the other rooms were filled, and this happened to be the quietest place in the house. One evening, when fourteen or sixteen people were expected to dinner, a carriage drove around the back way, and Aunt Mary's eldest son, quite insensible, was lifted out and carried to his own room. He was frightfully ill, and had been drinking heavily for days. It was terribly sad, for Frank was a dear, kind fellow, and had it in his power to give the people who loved him a dreadfully sick heart. In a few moments I left the parlour and went to my bedroom, and there I found Aunt Mary on her knees, praying, and perfectly convulsed with sobs. I closed my door softly and went back to the parlour. A little later I heard a splashing of cold water in her room, where the guests were taking off their light wraps, and she came out with her face quite fresh, dressed in a lavender muslin, and she was by far the most cheerful person at the dinner. She had that gift from God, a perfect faith in a future life, and in His goodness—how indeed could she doubt it, when she possessed so much of her own?

Among the servants that summer were a girl named Adler, and Willy, two young Swedes. They were very rough, and could speak scarcely any English. Aunt Mary became suspicious about Adler, and soon found that her suspicions were justified. On inquiring into the situation she found that Willy was quite willing to marry the girl, only he would not pay either for a marriage licence or the minister's fee. And he was getting thirty dollars a month and Adler twenty-

five—between them nine pounds a month. But neither appeals nor bullying moved the thrifty William, so the end of it was, that Aunt Mary bought the licence, paid the young clergyman who officiated, gave Adler a wedding gown, and the next week paid the doctor who ushered into the world, a free-born American citizen. I hear that Adler and Willy are now among the prosperous landholders of Austin.

Children are unerring in finding out their friends, and when we were all little girls and boys, my cousins and myself, Aunt Mary's house was overrun with children. There we foregathered whenever we could, and one winter things were planned out and done on a grand scale. There was a stage built in one end of the drawing-room, and we were to have one evening of wondrous tableaux. I was to do the "Sleeping Beauty." The part did not appeal to me one bit, but it was so much better than nothing that I consented.

Under Aunt Mary's guidance the girls worked for months. They sewed great wings, and spangled dresses and silvered slippers, and painted wands, and made tassels and caps, and borrowed properties—and at last the night of nights arrived. Of course all the girls wanted to be in the tableaux, consequently the audience was entirely composed of boys. There was a lovely supper prepared in the dining-room, of delicate ham sandwiches, chicken sandwiches, big iced cakes, jellies, ice creams, lemonade, and claret cup—and the evening promised to be one of unalloyed bliss.

The curtain went up on "The Peri's Lament." The stage really looked lovely—it was covered with moss and sea-shells, and on a sort of flowered mound lay the Araby's daughter, very pink and smiling, but drowned, of course, and surrounded by peris—charming beings in perfectly dry spangled dresses, with big white wings at the back—and in their clear children's voices they sang :

Farewell—farewell to thee, Araby's daughter !
(Thus warbled a Peri beneath the dark sea,)
No pearl ever lay under Oman's green water
More pure in its shell than thy Spirit in thee.

Oh ! fair as the sea-flower close to thee growing,
How light was thy heart till love's witchery came,
Like the wind of the south o'er a summer lute blowing,
And hush'd all its music, and wither'd its frame.

But long, upon Araby's green sunny highlands,
Shall maids and their lovers remember the doom
Of her who lies sleeping among the Pearl Islands,
With nought but a sea-star to light up her tomb.

Vociferous applause, and the curtain went down.

Tableau after tableau followed, until a good deal of scuffling and shuffling was noticeable among the audience. The boys were evidently getting hungry. The applause died away, but still the tableaux followed on. I wanted to get on my "Sleeping Beauty" dress, but nobody had any time to help me. Finally, as we thought, the curtain went up on a scene of surpassing beauty—the Fairy Queen, surrounded by her maids of honour, one bearing a tray and offering it to her with a cake and a small sugar ballerina in the middle of it. With this apparition the already whetted appetites of the boys immediately asserted themselves—the audience *en masse* rose to their feet, and the ringleader said: "We've had enough tableaux, we're going to supper."

Nannie Hayes, the Fairy Queen, had a fiery temper. She rushed through her cohort of handmaidens, her black eyes flashing fire, and stood perilously close to the footlights and said, "Oh, you wicked, ungrateful boys! Here we've worked the whole winter on these tableaux, and now you don't want to see them! Sit down this minute, or I'll go straight and tell father, and you will none of you get any supper. Sit down, I say."

The audience muttered, conferred together, then gloomily sat through three more tableaux, when again there was a strike, and Frank as the spokesman said they would rather starve than see another tableau. By this time I was quietly weeping, and the Fairy Queen, who had a very kind heart,

said, "Well, will you see just one more? Betty Paschal as the "Sleeping Beauty"?"

"What, that tom-boy!" Frank said. "Never! She isn't a beauty and we don't care to see her sleep as one. Not if you lock the dining-room door." And the audience then and there filed out.

I fished, and ran races, and climbed trees, and played marbles with the boys, and they liked me as another boy, but all the girls had sweethearts—I had none, and there were many incipient hopes bound up in that "Sleeping Beauty" tableau that, alas! like so much else in my life, was only a tantalizing, vanishing dream.

CHAPTER X

MY MOTHER'S DEATH

"O sir ! The good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket." WORDSWORTH

ALL only children (I was the young belated one in our family) long for little brothers and sisters, and I, so full of affection and so eager for companionship, longed for them more than most, but my nearest approach to this relationship was a little adopted brother who lived near us. "Miss Jenny," as I called his mother, put him in my arms a few days after he was born, and gave him to me as a brother. He was very small, and always remained frail and delicate, like a little snowdrop. "Miss Jenny" (Mrs Scott) was a beautiful tall girl with a heavy veil of hair that reached her knees. I loved the mother, but I adored the child. Every moment I could spare from lessons I spent playing with him, and he loved me, and cooed and crowed for joy at my appearance. When he was nine months old he sickened and died. I was allowed to kiss the sweet little waxen face in the white-satin-lined coffin, and when it was taken out of the house it really seemed to me that my heart was going to be buried too, and I grieved literally for months. Miss Jenny gave me his little white sunbonnet, exquisitely made by herself, all stitched with cords and delicately ruffled, and until I was married I always carried that white sunbonnet of little Jimmy's with me wherever I went. My own baby wore it afterward, and I have the little bonnet still.

When I should have been beginning my lessons the war

was ending. My brothers came home from the army, my father went north on business, and while he was away my mother died from heart disease. Telegraphic communication was difficult in those days, the wires were down, the postal service was greatly disturbed, and the first intimation my father received of my mother's death was from a newspaper which he was reading while crossing the Gulf of Mexico between New Orleans and Galveston. He told me afterwards that his first impulse was to throw himself into the sea, he felt life would be so valueless without her. Then he remembered his little girl, suddenly left motherless, and the impulse passed, leaving only a paralysing sense of loss. But a nature so unselfish as his quite recovered in time to his purposes, and his efforts, and services had always been for other people, and the unselfish and self-forgotten ones of the earth never, in spite of grief, wholly lose their interest in things and in people while life lasts.

My mother was, so I have been told, a woman of remarkable force of character. She was in her youth very beautiful, small and compact of stature, with a white skin, large blue eyes, a straight nose, a pretty mouth, a square chin, reddish hair, and tiny hands and feet. She had a great sense of humour, a beautiful voice—accompanying herself on the guitar on summer evenings when it was too hot to sit in doors—and she was a celebrated cook and housekeeper. Her garden was a curiosity of the town, with its myriads of flowers. If she had lived my habit of procrastination would have been cured, and other traits corrected that have militated against my success in life. She insisted on my dressing promptly, and not, with one stocking on, sitting dreaming with the other in hand, a habit that pursues me even to this day. She possessed that rarest and most valuable sense—common-sense—to a remarkable degree, and her advice was asked by all sorts and conditions of people. She kept her large family of brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, nieces, third and fourth cousins, together in love and amity, feeling the obligation of the tie of blood to be indissoluble. If any disputes or worries or disagreements arose, my mother endeavored

the conference with these words : " He's your kin—there is nothing else to do but stand by him "—and stand by him they did. I have never seen in any family such a sense of loyalty, of obligation, of affection and unselfishness, as among my mother's people.

Just at the end of the war my Mammy came to, my mother and told her that Charlotte, a negro woman who belonged to one of the neighbours, was in her cabin suffering from an accident ; her mistress had thrown a flat iron at her and broken her arm, and had then in a fit of temper ordered her to continue her work, which she did with one arm (she was scrubbing the floor), but when night came she ran away. I forget what the law was for harbouring a runaway negro, but it was very severe. My mother decided to keep Charlotte and hide her until her arm was well. So good old Dr Baker was sent for, Charlotte's arm was put into splints, and no one except my mother and Mammy knew her whereabouts, and she remained in Mammy's cabin until her arm was quite cured. She was a big woman and as powerful as a man.

During my mother's last illness Charlotte never left her, all the time carrying her from her bed to a couch on the balcony with as much ease as if she had been a child—and it was Charlotte's black hand that closed my mother's eyes with grief and lamentation when she died, and afterwards she and her little black baby, Pony, became a sort of responsibility and legacy to the family. Pony, by the way, became a mother at the tender age of fourteen, but Charlotte said it was only an accident, " an dat Pony didn't mean nuffin by it." Virtue was not in those days expected in the negro, but a want of virtue in a white woman was unforgivable. Everyone knows Hawthorne's story of " The Scarlet Letter " and the terrible sentence meted out to Hester Prynne. Really, it was no great exaggeration of the state of affairs in Texas when I was a child. If a man compromised the wife or daughter of another man, he knew the consequence beforehand. He paid for it with his life.

There were many more men than women in Texas ; every

woman, pretty or ugly, could marry some sort of man ; therefore morality was demanded of her, and after marriage her flirtations were at an end. As for the cocottes of the town, they were worse than lepers. They were not even spoken of. And yet beautiful low-necked ladies, with roses in their hair and diaphanous, flowered dresses, came out about sunset with fluffy parasols over their heads and paraded the town. I used to wonder who they were. One of them I admired exceedingly ; she was very tall, with hair like satin, lively black eyes, and always wore white. She managed to give me a bonny smile when she passed, though Mammy had ordered me to turn my head directly away from these fascinating, mysterious beings. When I grew up I was told that the tall one, called Sue Thomas, had married a young man, a friend of the family, of good birth, means and position, who had conceived a hopeless passion for her, and they had started for a new life in Mexico, but had both been murdered on the way.

One of our negroes had made an arrangement with my mother to pay for her own hire, and do what she liked with her time—that is, she paid my mother ten dollars a month, and set up a laundry for herself, making much more than this sum, as she was a genius in washing fine muslins and Valenciennes laces and the exquisite organdies worn in the South. One of her customers was a lady of the parasol, and she was ill, heart-sick, home-sick and repentant. She came from Kentucky, having been, like my mother, educated in her innocent and happier youth at Bardstown Convent. Finally after she became very ill, she was installed, as so many of the lame, halt, and blind had been before her, in Mammy's cabin, with Mammy and my mother to nurse her until she could start for home, my mother undertaking to pay her travelling expenses.

Wandering about the place one evening, I heard a hollow cough in Mammy's cabin, and when I entered there was a lovely lady with plaits of molasses-coloured hair, blue eyes, and of a ravishing beauty to me. She wore a blue muslin much beruffled, and prettier than any of my mother's frocks.

and I really thought she must be a princess. Mammy had often told me of fairy princesses, and here she was concealing one in her cabin.

My mother was vexed to find me there, and told me to run back to the house. Very unwillingly I obeyed her, and when next I stole away to Mammy's cabin it was empty and silent except for the sunbeams slanting in at the door, and a mocking bird singing in a fruit-laden fig-tree outside the window. The lady of the parasol had gone home to Kentucky to die; but that I was not to hear until many years afterward.

My mother hated show and pretension and falseness and hypocrisy, but she had the tenderest heart in the world for sin, poverty and misfortune. Her death was not only a loss to her own family but a loss to the whole town where she lived, for she had literally "clothed the naked and fed the hungry, and been a ministering angel to the sorrowing and afflicted."

CHAPTER XI

FOR LOVE'S DEAR SAKE

I love her, but tenderness obscures passion and respect holds it at bay.

AFTER my mother's death I lived with my aunt, Mrs Beale, until my father decided to send me to boarding school in the North. At this period of my life Aunt Lizzie occupied the place next my father in my heart, and until her death we loved each other tenderly and devotedly.

Love, sympathy and understanding are totally indescribable and mysterious things. Two quite excellent people may take a decided dislike to each other, and two quite unexcellent people very often are held together by some secret bond of sympathy throughout a long life. Between my mother and her eldest sister was the most perfect understanding I have ever seen between sisters, and they managed, except for short periods, never to be separated. My aunt married a gentleman who had a plantation in Kentucky, and my mother ran away from school at the early age of fifteen and married, as her first husband, a young surgeon in the navy. During the winters Aunt Lizzie visited my mother, and the summers my mother spent with my aunt at her plantation in Kentucky; and whatever the sorrows, troubles or anxieties of these two ladies were, they were lightened by the love, congenial companionship and sympathy of one for the other.

When I was born, I was named after my aunt Elizabeth, and one of my earliest recollections is of her. She was a very beautiful woman, and she had what I should call an old-fashioned skin. The girls of the present day have very often

fresh and healthy complexions, but they are apt to be a little tanned by the sun, or roughened by the wind, and the quality is not always fine. My Aunt Elizabeth's complexion was dazzlingly beautiful; even with a magnifying glass it was as smooth as satin; there was not a spot or a freckle or an imperfection on this white and pink velvet texture. She had large blue eyes, with black lashes, neatly marked eyebrows, a small straight nose, a rosebud, smiling mouth and even teeth; her head was proudly placed upon her shoulders, and it was covered with brown, waving hair that in the strong sunlight showed glints of gold. She had an upright, faultless figure, fairy feet, for she wore, I recollect, No. 1 shoes, and she always had difficulty in finding $5\frac{1}{2}$ gloves for her small white hands. She took the greatest care of herself, wearing a green veil if the sun was hot, never exposing herself to a strong wind that would dry her skin, and when she sat down to read, as she did for hours together, she always wore gloves. She did not marry until, as was considered in those days, she was quite an old maid—that is, she was twenty-six, and one of my younger aunts had kept a list of the men who had asked her to marry them. There were twenty-seven would-be husbands, and all her life long she never ceased to receive admiration. Besides her very great beauty she was witty, well read, very large minded, and a woman of extremely independent character. In her youth, when my grandfather was Governor of Florida, she had spent several winters in Washington, and her nieces were much interested in a description which she gave of her first ball at the White House.

She said that, although it was a cold night, and there was a snowstorm brewing, she wore but two garments, one of them a long linen lace-trimmed "shift," and the other a white satin dress with a blonde lace berthe. Her hair was crowned by a wreath of silver leaves, and my mother told me she was the most radiant of visions that night, and the belle of the ball.

My first distinct recollection of my Aunt Elizabeth was of her visiting my mother late one summer evening just before

twilight. She was dressed in a dark, magenta-coloured organdie, flowered in white, low necked with long sleeves, and she wore a small fichu of the same muslin trimmed with a little white silk fringe. In her white silk belt was a bunch of white roses, and ever since then I have loved white roses the best of all the garden of flowers.

Between my Aunt Elizabeth and myself was the same love and sympathy that had existed between herself and my mother. I was very different from my mother, who had a determined will and an imperious manner, and in my childhood she did not always understand me nor I her. I know, now that I have arrived at years of maturity, that she was one of the noblest and most generous women in the world, but as a child there was friction between us—but never for a moment between my Aunt Elizabeth and me. I have often felt a sort of mingling of my spirit with hers, so close was the sympathy between us, and yet we were absolutely opposite to each other on many points. For instance, I was born indifferent to dress. I notice pretty clothes on other people; I appreciate them, and like to see them; but my own clothes have always bored me to extinction, and if any toilettes of mine have been successes it has been due to the efforts of either kind relations, friends or dressmakers, or above all, to that wonderful sartorial artist in Paris, Leroux, from whom I occasionally get a gown. I find if you put yourself entirely in the hands of people who understand the subject of dress, and do not interfere or make suggestions to them, they will do their very best for you. Aunt Lizzie really loved dress, and with her beautiful figure did full justice to decoration; and she earnestly laboured to make me a conscientious dresser, but never succeeded. I was always eager for baths, hot and cold, ready to wash my hair three times a week if need be, to brush my teeth after every meal, and I spent a large portion of my pin money in tooth-brushes, mouth-washes, soaps and toilet powders: then I lost interest—while Aunt Lizzie's theory was that a woman under any and all circumstances should be well dressed. My aunt Florida Howard told me that when Elizabeth lived at "The Bend," her husband's

plantation in Kentucky, on the bend of a river, the nearest neighbour was nine miles distant, and the visitors were few and far between, and yet Elizabeth was always as spick and span, as if the madding crowd surged about her. Her hair was exquisitely done, she was well corseted, her dimity and muslin gowns were fresh and fashionable, and her feet faultlessly shod in openwork silk stockings and little kid slippers. In the evening she changed her dress to fine lace and muslin gowns, low-necked, with little capes. She always said she dressed for her own satisfaction, whether people saw her or not, and occasionally she became a veritable heroine as an exponent of her theory. All her life she had suffered agonies from headaches, so severe that temporarily they made her almost blind. But these headaches never conquered her toilettes. She would awake in the morning with racking pain, that would have put any other woman to bed, but she got up, took a bracing cold bath, powdered her face, put a dab of rouge on each cheek and on her chin, pencilled the neat eyebrows, dressed her hair elaborately in puffs and curls, arranged herself in a perfectly fitting princess morning-gown (she did not own such a thing as a loose and comfortable wrapper), then sat down in a straight-backed chair to rest. The only concession she ever made to a headache was a thin cambric pocket-handkerchief folded in a neat little square soaked in Eau de Cologne, nestling among the puffs and curls. She was always ready to receive visitors, and I never remember her in *deshabille*.

During the Civil War, when any delicacies in the way of food were almost impossible to get in the South, Aunt Lizzie went to San Antonio, where some boxes of raisins and barrels of sugar and coffee had been smuggled in through Galveston. She had little money to spend, but after looking a long time at the raisins, and smelling the coffee and sugar, she bought a bunch of violets to freshen up a straw bonnet. Isn't it Elbert Hubbard, that altogether original, courageous and delightful writer, who says: "If I had but two loaves of bread, I would sell one of them and buy white hyacinths to feed my soul?" The pleasures of the table never appealed

to Aunt Lizzie, though Melinda, her cook, was a genuine *cordons bleu*. She used to make a bread that I have never seen equalled ; it was known as " salt rising bread," and is made without yeast. It would have been possible only to a darkie cook who could nod over the fire all night without feeling any great fatigue in the morning, as an equal temperature was necessary, and constant watching, in order to have the bread rise properly. " Salt rising bread " went out with slavery, and is known to the younger generation only in name, but no cake I have ever tasted compared to it in delicacy.

Melinda's wedding was a quaint affair. She was going to marry a man called Sam, the servant of a neighbour, and she had planned a white muslin bridal gown, a veil and a big wedding, so dear to the heart of a negro, when on a Monday morning, while she was at the wash-tub, Sam appeared, and informed her that as soon as she dried the soap-suds from her arms she was to be married, as the minister was coming right along. In vain she expostulated and pleaded for delay and bridal attire and the wedding cake. Sam said he didn't want " no tarnation nonsense—dat it was now or never wid him," so, choking with sobs and tears of disappointment, Melinda stood at the side of her wash-tub, was married and returned to her work. And Sam, who was very busy with the season's crops, only appeared a day or two later, but he said he " done had it off his mind anyway." He made an excellent husband, and Melinda gradually recovered from her regret for the loss of her wedding.

At forty my Aunt Elizabeth was still a fresh beauty, very popular, and much admired. Among her suitors was a young man who remained her devoted slave for twenty years. At intervals during this time he proposed to her, but she always refused him, preferring the freedom of widowhood, and finally he married the very opposite of my aunt : a dull, colourless, monotonous, uninteresting woman in mind and appearance. Very often he strolled around to have a talk with his old love, who to the very end of her life remained witty and engaging. My aunt's speaking voice was music itself, and she was the

embodiment of naturalness without a vestige of either vanity or affectation. Really beautiful women are always freer from vanity than those of lesser pretensions to loveliness. Perfect beauty is an accomplished fact of which there is no doubt, and can be dismissed from the mind of the owner, and frequently is ; while merely pretty women are oftentimes in doubt of their good looks and need the constant bolstering up of compliments in order to be satisfied.

When, for example, I first saw Mrs Frances Lowther she possessed a really noble and very rare beauty. Her head was pure Greek. Her forehead low and broad, her features quite regular, her mouth finely chiselled, her eyes were deep blue, and the face was mobile with an ever-changing expression. Watts has made a beautiful "Clytie" of her, Gustave Doré painted her, Leighton has used her head for more than one of his pictures. Prinsep, Halle, Tissot, Boldini and other great artists asked her constantly to sit to them, and she had no personal vanity whatever, and hasn't a picture of herself, or even a bronze reproduction of "Clytie" ; and yet she must have known with all the admiration she excited that she was beautiful, but apparently she had forgotten it and dismissed it from her mind. And her loveliness has never spoiled her frank and honest nature, nor her sense of humour, nor her wit, nor has it chilled her warm heart.

The world is undoubtedly getting more materialistic, and the once-honoured ideals of self-sacrifice, loyalty and devotion are being laid aside. Passion and the indulgence of it at any cost, scarlet love, the realization of every complicated and subtle emotion, is the mode and preachment of the moment. Many a modern young man in his secret soul admires Oscar Wilde when he says : " I remember when I was at Oxford saying to one of my friends as we were strolling round Magdalen's narrow, bird-haunted walks one morning in the year before I took my degree, that I wanted to eat of the fruit of all the trees in the garden of the world, and that I was going out into the world with that passion in my soul. And so indeed I went out and so I lived." We all know the result of the experiment : first the court of justice

then the prison gate, and afterwards the prison—and even if he had not landed there, his soul would have been seared, and scarred, and stricken, by “the fruit of all the trees.” He learned later, poor, tragic, gifted singer, that life is sweet only to those who themselves are sweet and tender to humanity, and this is accomplished by self-control, self-denial and self-sacrifice. The delight in children, and flowers, and the country, domestic love, and romantic friendship, are fast becoming, like faded ribbons and old-fashioned ballads, things of the past. Sir Arthur Pinero’s touching play *The Thunderbolt* failed because the love interest in it was only the deep, sweet affection and the self-sacrifice of husband and wife. The critics voted it dry. Would they have understood my friend Sidney Lanier’s poem?

WEDDING HYMN

Thou God, whose high, eternal Love
Is the only blue sky of our life,
Clear all the Heaven that bends above
The life-road of this man and wife.

May these two lives be but one note
In the world’s strange-sounding harmony,
Whose sacred music e’er shall float
Through every discord up to Thee.

As when from separate stars two beams
Unite to form one tender ray :
As when two sweet but shadowy dreams
Explain each other in the day :

So may these two dear hearts one light
Emit, and each interpret each.
Let an angel come and dwell to-night
In this dear double-heart, and teach !

Since my earliest youth one of the most touching love letters in all the world to me is the one written by Comtesse de Florac to Colonel Newcome when they were both old people—

he married and the father of Clive, she the mother of children and the wife of a very old husband. But she had loved her first lover all the years of her life, with a patient, pathetic, unforgetting loyal love. In her letter she says :

“ Sometimes, I have heard of your career . . . he informed me how yet a young man you won laurels at Argom and Bhartpour, how you escaped death at Laswari. I have followed them, sir, on the map. I have taken part in your victories and your glory. Ah ! I am not so cold but my heart has trembled for your dangers, not so aged, but I remember the young man who learned from the pupil of Frederic the first rudiments of war. Your great heart, your love of truth, your courage, were your own. None had to teach you these qualities, of which a good God had endowed you. . . . I hold you always in memory. As I write the past comes back to me. I see a noble young man who has a soft voice and brown eyes. I see the Thames and the smiling plains of Blackheath. I listen and pray at my chamber door, as my father talks to you in our little cabinet of studies. I look from the window and see you depart. . . . I remember this was your birthday. I have made myself a little *fête* in celebrating it after how many years of absence, of silence. . . .

“ COMTESSE DE FLORAC
(*Née* ‘ L. DE BLOIS ’) ”

This letter is as if written with a pen of sweet dried lavender. It is from a loyal wife to the man she has always loved, and yet what unforgetfulness, sweetness, tenderness, it contains ! It is further endeared to me by the memory of a long walk, and a long talk with Justin McCarthy at Westgate-on-Sea one sunshiny, golden October afternoon. In the discussion of various things, and various people, Thackeray came along, and I mentioned the Newcomes and Madame de Florac's letter, and Justin then and there quoted it almost in entirety (he is gifted with the most wonderful memory). His rich voice was very sweet in the lines : “ I see the Thames and the smiling plains of Blackheath. I listen and pray at

my chamber door, as my father talks to you in our little cabinet of studies. I look from the window and see you depart."

Dear Justin ! Dear Thackeray ! It is for these recollections that I once made a journey to Blackheath.

And the gentleman who loved my Aunt Elizabeth for twenty years and remained her true friend to the end—he and all people who are simple, and straightforward, and loyal—are dear to my primordial heart. Thackeray himself was one of the faithful, long-suffering, platonic and self-sacrificing lovers. After his separation from his wife, caused by her long mental illness, he formed a great friendship with Mrs Brookfield, who was the wife of one of his oldest friends—and the close intimacy resulted in his falling in love with her. But the thought of disloyalty never entered Thackeray's mind. The world, however, was ill-natured over the friendship. Brookfield became cool to him, and finally Thackeray wrote him a noble letter of explanation in which he was reputed to have said he did love Mrs Brookfield deeply, but neither Brookfield, nor his wife, nor he himself, need be ashamed of his love, which was composed of tenderness and devotion, but above all of respect. Brookfield was a generous man himself—he understood, and after the letter the three friends remained intimate and united until the day of Thackeray's death.

There is something infinitely restful and uplifting in a love shorn of passion, but still faithful. This has often happened through Fate's contrary mandate, but only the noble ones of the earth can abide by it.



A SERIOUS CHILD OF TWELVE

CHAPTER XII

MY REGRET AT MY LACK OF EDUCATION

"Mankind is ignorant, a man am I,
Call ignorance my sorrow, not my sin."

BROWNING

AFTER living with my Aunt Elizabeth a short time my father decided to take me with him to the North and leave me at a boarding school. How inadequate education was at this period, particularly for girls! At Georgetown Convent, which was such a beautiful old place, not unlike a fourteenth-century Italian villa, with the Potomac running through its grounds, lovely meadows and orchards, and the best bread and butter I have ever eaten, I learned to dance, and to embroider, a little music, and something of manners—at the other schools nothing at all. Ladies of the Visitation (black-veiled nuns) conducted the convent. They were mostly women of good Southern family, and distinction, who had chosen to give up the world for a cloistered life, and at one period of the school the President of the United States gave the medal to each graduate, and placed a wreath on her virgin brow. It was soon enough after the war for one of the rules read aloud by the mother superior to be, "The discussion of politics and religion is strictly forbidden." I was much too young to care for either, but in spite of this rule occasional angry discussions ensued between girls from the North and girls from the South, and between Catholics and Protestants.

It was an excellent school for the morals of any girl. Without realizing it, the surveillance was constant. There

was a sister everywhere in the dormitories, in the class-rooms, in the recreation-rooms, in the playgrounds, and a *tête-à-tête* between girls was practically impossible. Secrets were discouraged, and frankness and truth were at a premium. The hour for getting up was unearthly—five o'clock—and each girl, as she left the dormitory, was obliged to have her teeth and finger nails inspected by a keen-eyed sister at the door. Many girls went back to use tooth brush and nail brush more vigorously, but, small as I was, my teeth and nails were invariably satisfactory. Scrubbing anything has always been an agreeable occupation to me, particularly my teeth—the consequence is that I have never had a toothache in my life, or lost a tooth. Another thing I owe to the convent is a love of cold water. Our most luxurious baths for invalids and delicate girls had “the chill off” only, and a nun’s “chill off” leaves the water still quite cold. I used to love my icy baths, freshly drawn from the chilled river, inducing the warm glow that followed afterward—and only rheumatism has ever driven me to the leisurely laziness of warm baths.

There was a Madonna-faced nun at the convent whom I adored. I can see her now. What blue, blue eyes she had, with long, perfectly straight eyelashes which gave her eyes a continually pensive expression. Her face was a pure oval, with a transparent skin, a fine aquiline nose, and a drooping mouth. She was a teacher of music, which in truth she knew only superficially, but I learned “The Maiden’s Prayer” under her guidance, and Thalberg’s “Home, sweet Home” with variations, and I loved her reverently and tried to imitate her voice and manner. It was said she had been engaged to a young Confederate officer on General Robert E. Lee’s staff, and that after he was killed in battle she entered the convent. We parted with many tears and embraces. She was to say always a little daily prayer for me, and I was never to forget her. I have kept my promise, and she was too unselfish ever to forget hers.

The old wardrobe sister was a beautiful needlewoman from Ireland. She made yards of Irish crochet lace, but nobody

wanted it in those days. She used to scold me for being slow with my mending, but I got good marks for neatness, and she used to say that "dirt never stuck to Betty." Even as a child I disliked dirt, except mud pies, and they are a different sort from spots, and stains, and London fogs, which are quite the worst of all.

My next school after the convent was at White Plains, New York. It was kept by the sweetest, gentlest, most worried creature I ever saw, and her sister, who gave me a Bible that I use still. The girls all thought Mrs Stirling a widow, but I heard later she had a bad husband who had disappeared into the West.

Except for the cold, which was detestable—frost and snow have a perfectly paralysing effect on me—I was quite happy learning my lessons as they were given to me, but I left school really profoundly ignorant, and all my life I have suffered and regretted my want of education. It is not what one knows that apparently matters so much—the topics discussed in social life are not very abstruse. Magazines, and newspapers, and an amiable manner, go a great way toward agreeable conversation of the everyday sort. It is the drudgery of study that is so steadying for the mind—the power of application and concentration of a real education that uplifts, and bears you beyond the pettinesses of uneducated people—that is of such inestimable value. I wish that even at three years of age my father had made me begin, like John Stuart Mill, the study of Greek. I did learn a little Latin, and liked it, but only the very beginning of Algebra, which I have forgotten, and never Geometry—and I had a mind that wanted something more than just the ordinary gossip of society, which bored me, even at a very early age, to extinction. The only true kingdom on earth is the kingdom of a well-stored mind, that nobody can wrest away from you. Parliaments can rob a monarch of his crown and his possessions, but a king in exile can take his store of knowledge and his well-disciplined mind with him. And I do most bitterly regret my want of education, and always have and always will, and, among my life's many failures and wants,

this want and failure of an education I consider the greatest of all.

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After the years spent at the convent and at boarding school we went back to Texas. It was a great joy to see my old home again. The very root of my heart is in the South—everything in it appeals to, soothes and comforts me. The hot sun, the rich vegetation, the blossoming trees of oleander, magnolia and crepe myrtle, the penetrating scent of the jasmine, the night-blooming cereus, and the honeysuckle, the silver nights when the moon makes luminous the deepest shadow, the soft, full-throated trills of the mocking bird, the caressingness of the air, the grateful freshness of early morning, the little shiny darkies, the corn bread, and rice, and rich water-melons, and fragrant coffee and velvety peaches—all these delightful things are mine by birth and inheritance, for, like me, they all belong “to the land of cotton, cinnamon seed, and sandy bottom away down South in Dixie.”

We settled down in our old home, and Mammy, who had such a pretty name—Hester—superintended the house-keeping, and a mocking bird came every night at nine o'clock, perched on the bough of a tree by the portico, and told us in a gush of melody what time it was. It is a curious thing, this habit of that particular bird, to sing at precisely the same hour for weeks at a time.

I began going to a day school and taking music lessons from one of the playmates of my childhood—Willie Boaz, who had been to Germany and studied music there. I thought to impress him by “The Maiden’s Prayer” and the variations of Thalberg’s “Home, Sweet Home,” but not a bit of it. He put me on five-finger exercises, and the small amount of music I know (which used to be one of the worst-taught things in the world) I learned from him. Although I was still going to school my hair was up, and I began to take notice of the various playmates of my childhood who were now well-grown youths, and the youngest lieutenants of the military post were also numbered among my friends. It was

the fashion in those days to serenade the lady of your choice, and this occurred to me so often that my father threatened to move further into the country. Guitars, banjos, flutes, and tenor voices were disturbing his middle-aged slumbers, but the serenaders did not end there. When a lieutenant serenaded he brought the entire brass band of his regiment, and that meant a box of candles in order to see the music. The performers were grouped around the porch, and afterward wine was offered, and this all in the middle of the night. Their arrival was announced by a strident "blam-blam!" and a deep groan followed from my father's room, which was next to mine. I arose, all joy and light, and hastily dressed, and he arose, all gloom and weariness, and slowly dressed. He did not care at all for music, and certainly not at one or two o'clock in the morning. It irritated him beyond measure, and I was not serenaded less than three times a week. My father was too sweet tempered ever to be really disagreeable, but the day after the serenade he was greatly depressed, while I bubbled over with satisfaction.

I remember once he was defending a murder case—a woman had killed her husband in a rather cold-blooded fashion, and the trial was to end the next day. He said when we went to bed, "I do trust, my dear daughter, there will be no caterwauling to-night." But that night of all nights we had three serenades—first a flute, then a baritone with his guitar (we hadn't to get up for him), and no sooner had he departed, and silence reigned again, than blam-blam! and the entire band of the 6th Cavalry had arrived. My father never swore, but I fear he did that night, and the next morning, before going to court, he said to me, "Mind, if that unfortunate woman is hanged it will be the fault of you and your infernal serenaders. I am worn out this morning!" But his logic and eloquence prevailed, and the woman got her freedom.

He never lost but one murder case. A negro in Washington cut off his wife's head with a cleaver while she slept, and my father defended him, but the negro was hanged. This broke my father's record, and he felt dreadfully about it. His

speech in defence of the man was so fine that the papers said he was an old slave of Judge Paschal's with a claim upon him of long service—but this was not true. Every client of my father made a claim upon him to do his best, and he did it. He was a born lawyer, with an actual knowledge of the law, to which he added thorough conscientious work, and when occasion demanded he was passionately eloquent—and above all he never wavered, and was as true to the interests of his clients as they were themselves.

Business called my father north, and there he met and married my stepmother—a handsome woman of many accomplishments, and as she preferred living in Washington, that delightful capital became our home. My father's marriage was very happy. He was exceedingly proud of his wife, she was devoted to his interests and was of the greatest help to him in his work, "The Digest of the Laws of Texas," and his "Annotated Constitution of the United States." He taught her how to make an index, and she was remarkably quick at the work. She was a most accomplished pianist, reading music at sight as other people read books, and, although my father never cared for music, he used to love to hear her play. She had faultless taste in the arrangement of a house, and she was a genius in dress. This delighted me, as I put myself completely in her hands, and wore with pleasure and without argument, the clothes she chose for me.

CHAPTER XIII

THE UGLY DUCKLING

“ Oh, the wild joy of living, the leaping from rock to rock,
The strong bending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water.”

BROWNING

MY father was married in the spring, and I went for the summer to Elkton, Maryland, to visit Mrs Young, a lady for whom I always had a devoted friendship, and although she was sixty and I sixteen we were perfectly congenial. For one thing she was beautiful, and I adore beauty. Her eyes were large, soft and brown, and her hair, snow white, was worn in soft puffs on either side of her face, and she was exquisitely, daintily neat and clean. Her housekeeping was of the sort that has gone out of fashion—the old-fashioned Southern housekeeping. The cooking was renowned throughout the county, and the boy in the kitchen who cleaned the pots and pans was required to leave them in such a state of perfection that a cambric pocket-handkerchief could be passed around the inside of one and returned to the owner unsoiled. And, what is more, I have seen it done many a time. The *pièce de resistance* of the house was peach ice-cream. The ripe peaches were mashed and put in pure sweetened cream, flavoured by Mrs Young, and Charley the pot-boy was set to work to freeze it, and in the evening at eight or nine o'clock the neighbours came in to partake of this celebrated dish. Many notable housekeepers tried, but no one ever succeeded in attaining the perfection of Mrs Young's icecream. The Misses Partridge, two aristocratic maiden ladies, refined, exclusive and poor, made

wonderful small cakes, really the most marvellous cakes I have ever eaten, superior even to those made in Austria, the land of cakes—and occasionally they sent Mrs Young a panful of these envied delicacies, but the secret of just how to make them they would never divulge. They said they would leave the receipt to the little town of Elkton when they died. I wonder if they did !

I returned to Washington in the autumn, and that winter was to be my *début* as a young lady. My first appearance was made at an army and navy German (a cotillon). My partner, a Mr Mark Severance from Boston, was singularly handsome, but not a good dancer. I would have preferred him plain and light of foot, for I adored dancing. Mother dressed me in white, with scarlet geraniums in my hair and on my dress, and she and I and Dan Gillette, a friend who did not dance, met Mr Severance at nine o'clock.

People danced in those days, and the German began early. I was feeling anxious about my success. After all, I was very young, and a perfect stranger in Washington. There were other girls, older, more experienced, prettier, better dressed ; maybe I would have no partners, or very few. Mr Severance was agreeable, but I was not at a cotillon to sit still. Presently Captain Mason, the smart young naval officer who was leading the German, clapped his hands for the first figure. We were all expectancy. My heart was beating like a trip hammer. He looked around the pretty circle, and probably the eagerness of my face attracted him. Anyhow I was the girl he selected for the first figure, and after that I was never off the floor. My feet ached at two o'clock, but still I danced on, covered with favours from head to foot, iridescent in tarlatan scarfs of various colours, laden with bouquets, but blissful and tireless.

That was the happiest night of my life, because my success was quite unexpected. The next day, by some freak of fortune and caprice of journalism, the Washington papers announced that I was to be the belle of the season, that " since Miss Harriet Lane's reign at the White House the belleship of Washington has been divided among numberless pretty

girls, but this year the honour, an undivided one, is to be given to a new *débutante*, Miss Betty Paschal." Of course, this was grossly inaccurate and mere newspaper exaggeration. Nevertheless, life began to take on very rosy hues, and I had a wonderful sense of the "wild joy of living." It was almost the story of the Ugly Duckling over again. It had never occurred to me that I had the least claim to good looks, and being an absent-minded, unanalytical creature, with more than my share of humility, I had not considered myself at all in those days except to be very grateful and appreciative of the affection which was given me. And suddenly to burst upon the world as a pretty girl was a wonderful and unbelievable surprise. As a matter of fact, my claim to good looks was of the slightest; it was only freshness and vivacity—no one knew that better than myself—and whenever people flattered me it gave me the sensation of having warped their real taste and judgment. My own ideal of beauty is so high, and so instinctive, that my eye detects at once every fault in all physical or mechanical misconstruction. I adore beauty in life or art. A beautiful man, woman, child, flower, star, sea, mountain, sunset or sunrise, a picture, or mosaic, or enamel, or tapestry, or statue, or carving, or gem—all these things have given me indescribable pleasure, and I knew that my face was much too irregular for beauty. There is so much that is lovely in the world to look at if one has eyes to see: it has been my pageant. Thank heaven always for that inestimable boon, sight. Of all my senses my eyes have given me the keenest pleasure—the beautiful things they have visually photographed, priceless, unattainable pictures all over Europe, and statues and lovely people and beautiful faces are by every detail of an accurate remembrance mine. Among the pictures one I particularly love is in Munich, by Böcklin. A midsummer azure sky of a transparent sapphire blue, with a full, warm, lazy sea breaking into frothy white waves, and floating up with and upon the curling water, and so much a part of it that at first they are unnoticeable, strange, glad, half-human, but wholly possible sea-creatures.

My first winter in Washington, a lost vision now, was almost too good to be true.

“ And the spray from the fountain of youth that clings
In May’s first dew to her whispering wings,
These are the gifts that our lady brings
To the land where the dreams come true.”

“ The spray from the fountain of youth that clings in May’s first dew ” was surely my right at sixteen—and besides that, a rare happiness was mine : an absolutely perfect, unconscious innocence. A complete want of curiosity, and an intense interest in the moment, had kept my mind from inquiring into material things, and so far as the complications of life and evil were concerned I was a child—a radiant, believing, vivacious, completely happy, healthy-minded, confident, dancing child. In those far-off, more friendly days in Washington, dancing was the principal amusement, and indeed the constant amusement for the young. There was either a ball or a dance every night, and at the large houses a matinee every afternoon, where you threw off your wraps and danced in your hat from three until six ; and at Annapolis what were called morning Germans were very usual. So I danced in the morning, I danced in the afternoon and I danced in the evening.

At first mother, who was so interested and busy in providing me with pretty (but simple) clothes, gave me tulle dresses and silk shoes, but these were soon danced to ribbons. Then I wore silk muslins and kid shoes. I remember for the Annapolis ball three young officers had asked me as a partner for the German, and I said yes to all of them—so, armed with bouquets, they all accompanied me, and with mother and my father we went to Annapolis. In those days it was the custom to carry all your bouquets, or, anyhow, all you could manage. There was the fourth bouquet waiting at the hotel for me, so with my arms full of flowers, and my three partners, I entered the ball-room and began the German. My poor father (for mother it was not so bad, as she was still

young and attractive, and danced herself) had to sit from nine o'clock until five in the morning, and, almost unbelievable now, another German was organized at ten o'clock the next morning at the hotel, and reinforced with bouillon and biscuits we danced steadily until two o'clock. In the afternoon we returned to Washington, and that night there was another ball, where I really went to sleep between the dances, but danced all night nevertheless. I was absolutely tireless, and could dance longer than anybody except one of the most enduring and best dancers we had—Dick Evans, a tall, good-looking, athletic man, who was always in urgent demand for every occasion. We must have danced some thousands of miles together that winter, but we never danced into each other's affections, though the families were old friends and were, like ourselves, Texas people, and Dick was a favourite of my father's. Mrs Stevenson, then Tilly Evans, was one of the sisters—she is now a distinguished scientific woman, great in Indian lore, customs and languages. I do not remember her in the old days as a dancer, but she was always a charming, interesting girl. Betty Evans, now Mrs Kellogg, another sister of Dick's and of fighting Bob's—Admiral Evans—was a perfect fairy on her feet, which were celebrated for their minute size.

After the Annapolis ball, one of the cabinet ladies gave a calico ball, the rule being that any costume was permissible if made of cotton material only. Mother, who was a queen of taste, sent me forth like a figure on a fan. A pale blue cambric petticoat, a Watteau overdress, much puffed on the hips, with a sharply pointed square-necked bodice, elbow sleeves and lace ruffles. The design of the sateen was a repetition of groups of shepherds and shepherdesses, surrounded by wreaths of roses. My shoes were black, with big paste buckles, and the black velvet on my neck and around my wrists was fastened with antique paste clasps. With extreme youth, a brilliant colour, black eyebrows, and the freckles discreetly dimmed with powder, I looked my best that night, and Mr Corcoran, who said he had not danced for five and twenty years, gaily stepped through a quadrille

with me. He was a very handsome, sympathetic old gentleman, and his snow-white hair, flashing black eyes and regular features gave him a most distinguished appearance.

With dancing and flowers, flowers in abundance, baskets and bouquets—sometimes a pyramid four feet high—and laughter, and joy, the winter wore away. At the close of the season an event happened that decided my future. Mrs Sheppard gave a fancy ball. Her husband, Governor Sheppard, was the Governor of the District of Columbia, and was making and planning Washington into the beautiful city it is now. The Sheppards had a splendid house, and she was an ideal hostess; very handsome and graceful and gracious—people flocked to her house, and on this occasion even the men did her bidding and all wore fancy dress. There were Shakespeares and Napoleons and Raphaels and Walter Raleighs and George Washingtons and Mexicans and troubadours. My escort was the sweetest possible Mephistopheles. Mother, who was dark, looked charming as a Spanish lady, all black lace and gold bobs, and a high gold comb. The hostess was a Venetian lady, in a long-trained gown of mauve and pink and gold, with flowing sleeves and ropes of pearls. My costume represented, of all things, the moon; feeling as I did at the time, the wonder is that it did not represent the whole solar system.

But even at that particular moment Fate with a birch rod was waiting to administer severe correction and make me pay for all my triumphs. But for that night I shone resplendent. My dress was of amethyst-blue satin strewn with stars; it was looped up at one side by a round, pink-cheeked, silvered full moon. The bodice was brilliant with stars, and a silvered crescent slanted down one side of it. In my yellow flowing wig also glittered stars, and a crescent with the points curved up was fastened to a diadem resting on my hair. Moonshine, as usual, was popular, and only at half-past five o'clock did the moon sink to rest.

Among the many dancers at the ball was an extraordinarily handsome young Sir Walter Raleigh in black and silver. He was watching the dancers when Governor

Sheppard asked if he was star gazing. "No," he said, "I'm contemplating the moon, and I'm going to be the first man in the world to marry her," pointing in my direction.

"Do you," said Governor Sheppard, "happen to know her?"

"No," said Sir Walter, "nevertheless, I shall marry her." And he did, the following winter.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORLD'S DIVINEST LOVE

“God cannot be everywhere, so He made mothers.”—*Egyptian Proverb*

MY observation and experience in life convince me that certainly God can trust, with very little direction, a good mother to do His work. Men believe the progress of humanity to be due to their energy, but the maternal instinct is the most powerful lever in the world. Through it children are born, loved and cared for even though they bring disgrace. There is no man who understands the maternal instinct so well as Barrie. In his play of “The Wedding Guest” he made a powerful plea for all mothers, even the unwedded mother, but somehow it failed. Perhaps he was not bold enough. At any rate his dormant meaning was that maternity in any form dignifies and ennobles—and with a true mother it must do so. There is a scene between the old maid aunt, who in her heart of hearts had longed for children, and the artists’ model, who was the mother of the child in question. The aunt is prim, and, even while loving children, thinks it a condescension to offer to adopt the baby—the illegitimate child of her nephew—but when she has made her offer the mother rises in her wrath and says, “Go, you *childless* woman—go!” That is her reproach—the impossibility of a woman to understand who has not borne children.

There are many women, however, who have never been physical mothers, to whom Nature has given the mother’s heart. They are the sisters of charity who care for the aged, and bring up and love the nameless foundling. There was a nun in New York, a famous mendicant, courageous and plucky

in getting money for her convent, and when she died there were eighteen hundred orphaned children under her roof. What a great mother's heart beat in her breast! There must have been many little cherubs to welcome her directly to Heaven, for surely when she left this world she was purged of sin. The women who delight in nursing the sick are mothers. The Salvation Army women who give hope to the fallen and the criminal are mothers. The founders of convents are mothers; and luckily for the women of fashion many a nurse or a governess is an ideal mother—tireless, self-sacrificing and loving. How often have I seen in the South an old maid sister, or aunt, mothering a whole set of fledglings, and giving up her whole life to the service of another woman's children, but hers by right of love. These self-elected mothers are the most unselfish of all the race. Maternity is so beautiful, so nearly divine, that in creating humankind it seems to me an infinite pity not to have made all women mothers at thirty, just as a rose-tree bursts into blossom. Then the woman's heart, filled by this nearly divine love, would have opened to a greater understanding of humanity. And it is not only the love for her own child that so opens the heart of a woman. This God-given instinct makes her a universal mother. Catholics understand this in looking upon the mother of God as the mother of all the world. And through motherhood a new interest arises in all children, and the woman is infinitely more tender and pitiful to sorrow and trouble. It is mother love which creates understanding of both sin and sorrow, and makes forgiveness possible.

There was an eminent judge in a certain town in America who had an only son, who was apparently a naturally depraved blackguard, but he looked as unlike the accepted idea of one as possible. Clear, brown, frank eyes met yours in an honest, straightforward way. There were dimples in his cheeks and chin, while a constant laugh displayed strong white teeth. He had cordial, engaging manners, a quick intelligence and great ability. His wife was a beauty, a pocket Venus, and their one child, a little girl who had a touch of genius, always reminded me of that adorable child, Marjorie Fleming,

Sir Walter Scott's friend, who recorded in her diary that "the most devilish thing is 8 times 8, and 7 times 7 is what nature itself can't endure."

But all these advantages did not produce the smallest effect on this hard, bad nature. A black-hearted villain can laugh quite as lightly and as heartily as the best of good fellows. This man lied and drank, and cheated at cards, and lost caste, and finally forged his father's name. To save him from prison, the father sold what property he had, mortgaged his house, resigned his judgeship, and retired with his wife and daughters to the country. The son was banished and his name was never to be mentioned. Of course he went from bad to worse, and finally stole the watch of a woman of ill repute, was arrested and put into prison. Then the divine protecting love of the mother asserted itself, and Mrs N. came to New York, where I was living. She arrived late in the evening and said, "Betty, I know you'll take me in and help Bobby." Then she burst into uncontrollable weeping.

We talked until two in the morning, and when I went to bed I heard her wearily walking in her room the whole night through; at dawn I went to her and she said: "His father and the girls would be so angry if they knew I had come. It isn't the Bobby of *now* that I want so much to save, it's the baby who once lay on my breast. It's the chubby child of four, so strong and so affectionate—why, he was the most loving of all my children! And though he is in gaol I love him still—I am his mother."

We went together to the prison, and she did not utter one reproach, but gave him money, and employed a well-known attorney to defend him. And he got off with a light sentence. Maybe he did better afterwards—I never heard of him again. Truly God cannot be everywhere, so He made mothers. I was very young when my baby's cry flooded my heart with a warm love, an anxious love, an undying love, quite unlike anything I had ever experienced. "Is it a boy?" I asked eagerly. I wanted a boy and Dr Reilly laughed and said to the nurse, "He looks like a boy, doesn't he, Anne?" And when he was cradled in my arms, in all my life that was the

THE
CAMPBELL



IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH

A DEBUTANTE

TO THE
REPORTING

very happiest moment. It must be a terrible, an unspeakable grief to lay a baby in his little white muslin shroud in the earth—but rather than never to have been a mother at all I would have undergone this bitter experience.

When my baby was about eighteen months old we had a very hot summer in Washington, and he was taken suddenly ill with that dread disease from which children suffer in America—cholera infantum—and at a moment's notice we went to a farm in the country. How near death he was; how wasted away to a little pale skeleton, and eaten with fever and nearly unconscious! Neither night nor day did I leave him, and except for dozing at his bedside never felt the least need of sleep. Finally the weather became a little cooler, and the doctor said I might carry him about the garden on a pillow. He had not as yet taken the least notice of anything, but as I walked under the trees in a meadow I passed by an old white horse who lifted up his head from the grass, and suddenly the child smiled, and put up a poor little thin hand to stroke the animal's nose. I sat down at the horse's feet, and had a good happy cry, for I felt my baby was going to get well. From the farmhouse we went to the mountains in Virginia and joined my friends, Harriet and Henry Morgan. Toodie was quite well then, and could toddle around, and insist upon his own way, which Franzie Morgan and his other older playmates willingly gave him. Franzie was one of those children, so beautiful, appealing, intelligent, gentle and obedient, that one has an instinctive feeling that it is impossible they can grow up to selfishness and evil. Although too young to have a comprehension of what adverse criticism of a man meant, if he heard it he lifted his noble head from his toys and said with a heavenly smile, "But he's good, he's good." He had given eight years of pure happiness to his mother when, in her own language, "he went away to the beautiful country." The wind is tempered to the shorn lamb, and a clear, intense, complete faith in a Hereafter has been given to Harriet Morgan. She is as sure of the reality of another life as I am of the reality of this one. The utter unselfishness of her

grief for her one ewe lamb went to the very core of my heart. Indeed, the unselfishness of her whole life, which she gave up entirely to comfort the sick and lift up the weak-hearted, kept her from being a famous woman, for she was gifted with a perfectly original, humorous and, at the same time, poetical mind. The veriest prose she translated into poetry. The most sordid scandal she covered up with a soft veil of heavenly charity. And hers was the merriest, gayest, sunniest, most hopeful nature I ever saw; no circumstances daunted her optimism, or her belief in the steady improvement and progress of the world. "From hatred and malice, Good Lord deliver us!" were words not written for her. Nothing approaching those qualities was known to her tender heart. She had entered a purified intellectual atmosphere and left all the meannesses of life down below. Franzie had given her the play-name of "Rosy Pink," which suited her to perfection; his father, Henry Morgan, was "Tom," and he was "Jack O'Nory."

The clouds were beginning to darken my horizon at this time, and those three dear ones, Rosy Pink, and Tom, and Jack O'Nory, were my constant friends and playmates, my refuge from all that was unhappy and disquieting. But Franzie never grew up, and his death only added to the unselfishness of his mother. Her letters were touchingly tender and resigned, though the light of her life had gone out:

"1015 L. STREET,
"WASHINGTON, *Thursday*.

"ELIZABESS DEAR,—Oh, the old-fashioned name. 'Elizabess' he called it. How I thank you for the dear loving letter; with all the kind letters that came from those who loved little Babio Mow, little Jack, little Franzie, I missed greatly yours, and Will went round twice to N. Street to ask if you were still in Virginia. On the 12th August Will wrote to you at Berkley Springs and I knew you had never received the letter or you would have written to your poor Hallie, one of your 'wedding guests,' who is walking about in the

world whose sun is set, while the other is full of gladness in the beautiful country. He had been so well this summer, so good, so beautiful, so bright, that I have sometimes thought it was wrong not to take him among his people because he was so worthy of admiration, and then we thought a simple life was the most healthy for him body and spirit. For one week after he was taken ill we fancied he had only a common ulcerated sore throat, and the new homœopathic doctor in the country said he was not really ill. He was downstairs on the sofa, sometimes walking about, and sometimes singing, but sleeping a good deal. On the sixth day Tom brought out a doctor from the city and the next morning we all came into the town. From that time, dear, we began to trouble our little one greatly, trying to make him well, but he only stayed with us one week longer, lovely and loving till he left us, and Tom and I are desolate. It was diphtheria, but we have to thank the Merciful Father that the suffering of that terrible disease was spared to us and him, and that his little lovely noble face looked beautiful through all. I do not think we are rebellious, Elizabess dear, I believe that our whole hearts are turned towards that blissful day of meeting again, but the road we are travelling is very desolate and we are so lonely for our little one. Tom read your letter with the tears streaming. He says, 'Oh, such a kind, dear letter. She has a good loving heart.'

"Oh, Elizabeth, what can we do? I cannot write any more to-day. Kiss darling little Toodie for me.

"Thank you for your love and prayers. I hope you will come soon to us. Your loving

HALLIE

"Do you remember my darling's name for me, his name, Rosy Pink, dear, dear name!

"Tom and Rosy send you love and thanks. Will is in New York. In our time of trouble he was father and mother and brother to us and never left us."

A beneficent providence has left me Tom and Rosy Pink. Tom and Rosy, like myself, are older now, and when I go

back to Washington, which is through many associations so dear to me, by taking a train and travelling a little way in the country I arrive at Rose Garden, where I have passed so many happy days. They sold it once, and then Rosy cried all night, and the next day Tom bought it back again by giving the owner (who vowed he loved it so, although he had only owned it one day, he couldn't part with it) an extra five hundred dollars more than he had paid for it. Tom and Rosy are not good business people—every one has profited by them. I have worn Rosy's pearl earrings for thirty years, and by this time she has given away all her pretty things, but she has still love, and enthusiasm and appreciation, and hospitality to give to those who ask it—this truest and best and sweetest of all the women in my human garden of friends.

CHAPTER XV

MY FIRST EMPLOYMENT

Work is the salvation of a tried and restless soul.

WHEN my father's health began to fail, and we with others were dependent upon him, without consulting anybody I went to the President of the United States, General Grant then, and asked him to give me employment. Diplomacy is all very well, but I believe in going to the first person in power when a favour is wanted, and stating quite frankly your necessity. Many people love go-betweens ; I always do without them and am my own go-between—it saves much trouble and misunderstanding.

General Grant had gone out of his way to be polite to me as a girl on my first appearance at a White House reception, and had said something to my father about me which had pleased him greatly. And my liking for him was strong and instinctive ; he was so quiet, with steady, kind eyes, a deep, agreeable voice, and gave an instant impression of strength and manliness. I talked to him freely, and he said there was some work which could be given me in the War Office among the archives, which were then in process of being sorted, indexed and made into books. His rugged face softened, and he added, " Perhaps it will be as well for you to have your work at home, you are really too young to go to an office. I'll speak to our new Secretary for War and see what can be done."

Don Cameron had just been made Secretary for War, and he was not at all inclined to send the MSS. to me and to make an exception in my case. But of course General Grant had

his way, and I worked at home on the archives, while Toodie by my side careered back and forth on a fine rocking horse covered with real horseskin and with the flaring nostrils of a racehorse, a tribute of affection to him from a wealthy friend in New York. Subsequently I went to the War Office for a short time, and joined the ladies there who were doing the same work. It was a very pleasant occupation. We arrived at nine (or for me thereabouts) o'clock in the morning, and left the office at four, and I made two friendships which have been of lifelong duration.

My dear father was much opposed to my doing anything at all, and himself offered to substitute my salary, but I have always loved work—it is the greatest aid to happiness, to steadiness of nerve, to good judgment and sanity, in the whole world. I only hope that I shall die in harness, for idleness to me is in my changeful life self-introspection and grief. If only I had done this at that time, and not done that at another time, life might be different—but all repining is so useless and so weak. It is difficult, with insomnia ever at my door, and unstrung nerves, to master and dismiss thought, but these words of John Trotwood Moore, that industrious and delightful writer of the South, have been of infinite help and comfort to me :

1. Throw off the curbs of thy past !
2. Fools cling to their folly, and the witless to the beaten highway.
But be thou wise to seek the new road that leadeth to the life anew. Throw off the curbs of thy past.
3. Grieve not over things agone. Shed not tears for past errors.
Let the penance of thy past shrive the dead of thy past and be thou the High Priest of thine own future. Throw off the curbs of thy past !

Wise is he who garnereth honey from the hornets' nest, and worthy of praise who followeth the sting of bees to the bee tree. Throw off the curbs of thy past.

Forget thou wert ever wronged ; remember not that thou wert ill-used ; think not of the days of thy scorning, for by taking thought of them they become part of thee, and having already had their setting by thy fireside thou wantest them no longer as the guests of thy soul. Throw off the curbs of thy past.

“Forget thou wert ever wronged.” “Throw off the curbs of thy past.” The essence of a brave and gentle philosophy is all there. It is curious this help of certain writers to certain people. A most charming Florentine, the Marquesa Piccollelli, told me James Lane Allen’s “The Choir Invisible” had been to her in a time of mental conflict like the Balm of Gilead. And this year in New York Mrs Waith gave me Gustav Frenson’s “Jorn Uhl,” saying it had brought light and peace into her life in her darkest hour. To me it is a sad and depressing book, with only the magnificent description of the battle of Gravelotte (which should be used as a tract for peace) to illumine its relentless pages.

In the old days in Washington I used to see a good deal of Walt Whitman. He was an early riser and often walked with George Douglas—a brilliant young journalist then on Don Piatt’s fearless paper “The Capital,”—and myself to the War Office. Walt Whitman was extraordinarily handsome and definite in appearance. His skin was as pink and white as a baby’s. His hair, which he wore rather long, was like spun silver, and his eyes were an intense burning blue. All the spring and summer he was dressed from top to toe in spotless white—a big white slouch hat, white serge or linen clothes, a soft white linen shirt left quite unbuttoned at the throat, and white shoes. He was very merry and cheerful, and often carried a roll of MS. and generally read bits of it in a sonorous voice to us as we walked along. Douglas was one of his warmest admirers, and was ever ready to listen. My mind in those days was too undeveloped to appreciate the manliness, virility and courage of his work. Now I understand. The late John Bright, who was an appreciative lover of poetry, considered Walt Whitman a great poet, and with his fine elocution he loved to repeat whole pages from “Leaves of Grass.” Mr Labouchere once said to Bright, “Most people have read Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost,’ but I wonder if anybody has read ‘Paradise Regained,’ ” whereupon Bright began with the first line and sonorously repeated the greater part of it then and there; Mr Labouchere

frankly confesses this is his only experience of "Paradise Regained."

One day Douglas and I went to Walt Whitman's room to see him ; he had only one—he was very poor—and it was as sparsely furnished as a monk's, but very clean and tidy, and he made us fragrant Virginia coffee (he loved a little cooking), and brought out some old-fashioned Southern gingerbread for me, and then he read for quite an hour, with an occasional glance at me. He saw I lacked enthusiasm, but said it was the fault of youth and femininity, that he had every hope of my growing up some day to the highest leaf of grass, and I remember his voice, which was expressive and full of colour, in these lines :

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking
 Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle
 Out of the ninth-month midnight,
 Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving
 his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot.
 Down from the shower'd halo,
 Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they
 were alive
 Out from the patches of briars and blackberries
 From the memories of the bird that chanted to me.

He said : " You are from the land of mocking birds, you know the musical shuttle of his throat all blown to roundness by his thrilling melody." And Douglas begged him to read " A Festival Song " :

" The duet of the bridegroom and the bride, a marriage march,
 With lips of love, the hearts of lovers fill'd to the brim with love,
 The red flushed cheeks and perfumes, the cortege swarming full of
 friendly faces young and old,
 To flutes' clear notes and sounding harps' cantabile."

It sounded really like a song from his lips ; and I wondered why he had never been a bridegroom. Later, one delightful first of May, he and Douglas, old black Sophy (Toodie's nurse), Toodie and I went over in the boat from Washington to Alexandria, spent the day in and around the old church

looking at the tombs and the English names. We made a simple lunch of bread, fried chicken and milk on the porch of a little hotel, and came home in the twilight, laden with white lilac, and Toodie very tired and sleepy, but ecstatically happy, holding in his hand a huge gingerbread horse with raisin eyes, which Walt Whitman had sighted in the window of a little shop, and, though it was an advertisement, had bought it and triumphantly borne away.

Douglas was a budding poet too, and on the boat he read these verses to Walt Whitman; they were going into "The Capital" the next Sunday, and Whitman clapped him on the shoulder and said: "Good, good!" with his eyes dancing at me. "I reckon she understands that kind of poetry, George." The MS. "Bessie" was given to me then, signed by the author and initialled by Walt Whitman, and it is with other relics of my youth locked in a box and labelled "Boysie" for my grandson.

BESSIE

Where, my sweet enemy, lies your power
To move men's wills?
You are a deadly perfumed flower
That shines and kills.
Your face is brighter than a diamond's splendour
Or any jewel;
Swift eyed, yet sad, and seeming tender
Demure and cruel.

Thrown back in warm and mingling tresses
Your fragrant hair
Falls from a brow too chaste for love's caresses,
Too chaste and fair.
Your lips blush deeper than the roses,
Your murmuring words
Are better than the breath of violet closes
Or song of birds.

I watch you, love, my heart is trembling
To find you there.
So strangely self-same undissembling,
So fair, so fair!

Calmer than death, a white-faced statue,
How can I move you ?
I love you dearly, wondering at you,
Hate you and love you !

Leave go my soul and let me hasten
Far from your spell.
These bonds you bind me with unfasten
While all is well !
Why do you glisten with such beauty,
So strong and fateful,
When walking coldly down the paths of duty
You seem so hateful !

I think of treason, plot, defiance,
Your vivid presence
Comes on and holds me with a magic science
That never lessens.
You are so subtle, so magnetic,
I thrill and crave
Servile beneath you and ecstatic
Like a drugged slave.

Eyes swift like lodestars in clear winter weather,
Lids lashed and curled.
Oh, face more fair than worlds together
Than all the world.
Why will your glory ever so pursue me
With pleasant pain ?
Bright eyes that kill me with your burning through me
And quicken me again.

I ask not love—nor love's endearment
But only this ;
To kiss the hem of my lady's garment
With a soul's whole kiss.
To have you near me, waking, sleeping,
Living and dead,
To give my heart, sweetheart, into your keeping
And keep you in its stead.

Although Douglas was young enough to be Walt Whitman's grandson, Whitman outlived him many years, and we wept together at the grave of our friend, who died in early manhood too soon to fulfil the promise of his gifted youth.

CHAPTER XVI

LOVE MEANS SACRIFICE

MY vacation that year was spent with friends in New York. I had always loved the theatre, and everything connected with it, and I was sure, without ever having acted even in a charade, that I *could* act, and so I went to see A. M. Palmer, who was at that time in the zenith of his success as a theatrical manager. I told him what I wanted, and he asked me to walk across the stage and repeat some bits of poetry, anything I could remember. I was horribly frightened, and have always had a memory like a sieve, but in some way I managed it, and he then and there agreed to give me a three years' engagement at twenty-five dollars a week, and to arrange elocution, singing and fencing lessons for me.

I ventured to say : " Then you think I have some talent ? "

" I don't know about that," said Mr Palmer, " but you have individuality, and some day some fellow will come along and see it, and write a play you that will suit you, and then you may make a big success. Now you have everything to learn, and much hard work before you. Come to-morrow morning and sign your contract."

The world had suddenly become a paradise to me, and when I asked " When am I to begin work ? " " Next week," Mr Palmer said.

It was midsummer, his excellent company was on tour, but the Vokes were going to do a short season, and there was a very small, unimportant part which could be assigned to me. The next morning I signed my contract, and the day after I returned to Washington.

My father's health was just beginning to fail ; he died eighteen months later ; and when I showed him, with great

pride and joy, my contract, he wept—the bitter tears of weakness, sorrow and old age. He knew absolutely nothing of the stage, but he considered it an abyss of wickedness and vagabondage. He said that, much as he loved me, he would rather see me dead than a “play actress.” I called upon mother, who was less prejudiced and had great influence with him, to plead for me, but he was immovable, and finally, after two days of misery for us all, I sat down and wrote Mr Palmer a long letter, and he sent me a telegram : “Very sorry. Quite understand. Am writing.” And he did write me such a kind letter to say that some good fortune would attend my obedience ; but he was mistaken. “The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun.” I loved my father, and made the supremest sacrifice of my life for him, but I was not happy, for the great hope and desire of all my life was dead—my sun had set. He did it for the best, but it was a mistake on his part, and even on mine to give way to him. It was necessary for me to make my living, and I should have been allowed to choose the work most congenial and best suited to me. We must all live our own lives ; there are probably so many years before us when our parents are gone that it is well for them to recognize this in the beginning, and to let us individually work out our own salvation. There is nothing sadder or more depressing in life than the feeling of having missed one’s vocation—and it has always pursued me. In this respect my father was supremely happy. He had chosen the profession of all others best suited to him. He loved the law, he had a prodigious memory—his mind was like an encyclopædia of the statutes and the different cases which he argued before the Supreme Court. It was scarcely necessary for him to consult his well-stocked library. And he had an innate love of bringing order out of chaos, and a bull-dog tenacity of never letting go when he had once taken hold that was unparalleled.

The remainder of that summer between us was a very intimate one. We were alone ; mother and her baby, my dear youngest brother (Sam Paschal), just the age of my little son, had gone into the country, and my father and I read and

worked together, and sat up late at night with a jug of iced water between us and a little fruit, discussing all sorts of questions. We never mentioned the stage, but he was very tender to me, for he knew I had made my supreme sacrifice—and I was cheerful, for my motto has always been, “If you do a thing at all do it thoroughly.” Every sacrifice, great or small, should be made bravely or not at all. I was never more impressed by this than when Lady Q. told me about the marriage of her eldest son. He was the favourite of all her children—handsome, clever, generous, sympathetic and affectionate, but lacking in common-sense (that rarest of all the qualities), and he married a lady who had for a number of years spent her evenings in the Alhambra and was, alas, too well known to the *jeunesse dorée* of London. Sir Q., the father, was utterly disgusted, and said of course they must cut the son, and his name must never be mentioned—and for a year there was silence. Then Lady Q. said, “Q., I must see Bobby again. We must ask him and his wife to visit us.” Sir Q. said, “Impossible,” and his wife said, “No, it isn’t.” Sir Q. said, “That woman—how shall we receive her?” Lady Q. looked at him with her tender, faithful eyes, and said, “We will receive her exactly like a daughter.” And she said to me, “I did; I made no difference between her and my own children.” And she added, “She was very sweet in many ways, and she has made me more charitable to every other woman with a chequered past.”

This is true generosity, not only to forgive, but to do it nobly and entirely. There is indeed no use in doing anything in a petty manner. A great psychological doctor says there are thirty-six differences between a negro and a white man—one of them is that the negro’s leg is placed in the middle of his foot, giving him as much foot behind as before. In a crowd on the street in Washington a little darkie was stepping on an old white-haired negro in the rear, when the old man turned around and said, “Boy, git off my heel—git *intirely* off.” So if we are going to do anything in life, we should do it with a whole heart, and “intirely,” like getting off the darkie’s heel.

CHAPTER XVII

A NOBLE LIFE

“Death meant, to spurn the ground,
Soar to the sky—die well and you do that.” BROWNING

THE year after we had spent the summer so happily alone together, my father's health began to be seriously affected, and a long and very dreadful illness followed, but in all his terrible insomnia, and constant pain, I never heard him say an impatient word. He was far more distressed at giving trouble to the nurses, and to the family, than on account of his own suffering, and even when his mind began to be obscured he never forgot for a moment his beautiful consideration, and his courtly manners. When I would go into the room in the morning sometimes he would look at me blankly, and say to the nurse: “Robert, give this lady a chair. I am sorry that I cannot offer you a seat myself, madam, but as you see I am ill. Will you have a cup of tea?” and then I would say to him: “Oh, dearest, don't you know me?” And my voice never failed to call him back, and he would sigh and say, “I thought, my daughter, for a moment, you were a stranger; and it does distress me so, not to be able to give visitors a proper welcome.” Whenever I entered his room, my father had risen and said to me: “Will you have this chair, my daughter?” And when I went out he opened the door. His politeness was as natural to him as the breath that he drew, and even when he suffered occasionally from delirium during the last weeks of his life he was always courteous and always considerate. And when he died my careless youth ended. Life was never the same to me again.

While he lived my worries, no matter what they were, seemed to drop naturally on his broad shoulders and he was only too glad that they should. There was never anyone like him. He was wise, and just, and merciful, and courageous, and charitable, and true, and self-sacrificing, and pure in mind and heart. The exalted and humane religion of his life gave him as nearly divine a spirit as mortal can possess. He believed that at the eleventh hour, by a Christ-like inspiration, the wickedest sinner could turn about, repent, and be the means of great good in the world. He believed that the liars, hypocrites and thieves had a chance of becoming, through a change of heart, repentant saints, and he believed the Magdalens could all shrive their souls of uncleanness and become pure once more. His outlook on all evil was that of a forgiving and merciful and optimistic saint. I loved him not only for his saintliness, but for himself, and I have never ceased throughout my life for one moment to lament his loss, and sorely to miss his absence.

After my father's death, at the meeting of the Washington Bar, the Chief Justice Carter presiding, Mr Riddell said of him in his memorial speech :

“ Judge Paschal was quiet, of grave face and thoughtful mien, but a word dispelled the seeming reserve, the features lit with a smile, followed with pleasant words. He was a man of the highest character, the frankest manners, of warm impulses and temperament, full of a tender sensibility, a true, noble child of the South, illustrating in character and life what is best of her generous products. Nature endowed him liberally : a life of pure morality, abstemious habits, a rare power and will for persistent labour, these, and his many years, made him that rare thing after all, a very able and most accomplished lawyer. A lawyer, whom every lawyer calls a lawyer, is in the main the result of growth, to which much time, many years with care and much culture are necessary. Not the care of the hothouse, nor yet greatly the culture of the schools, or of philosophic retirement, but that which is had in the free open atmosphere of the Nisi Prius Courts, and in the never-ending

mental contests, of strong, vigorous, sinewy minds, daily at their best in the adjustment of the most interesting and important affairs of individual man.

“Trained in this school, cultured in its ever varied law, Judge Paschal was a lawyer—few men were ever more so—a learned lawyer. This is about the highest praise lawyers ever do or can award the leading men of their ranks. They say an advocate’s effort was ‘lawyer like,’ and in this they bestow their most valued encomium. No men know better the value of their fellows. No profession in the world is less jealous of the fame of each other. They know the limits of human excellence, and, save in exceptional instances, that there is no great difference among really good lawyers. In this sense Judge Paschal was really a great lawyer. Great as they have anywhere. He was something more than a mere lawyer. It has never taken the greatest human intellect to make the greatest lawyer; possibly the greatest mind might miss that distinction. Judge Paschal was a man of wide, liberal, enlightened views—the views of a Statesman. He was a man of thought, of ideals, of high aspirations, and of wide learning.

“I first met my friend here. We were not much alike—he from the extreme South—I from the farthest North. He, ‘raised’ amidst institutions of which the chief was slavery—I, reared in the civilization of puritans. He was an exile from a home and country in ruins; I, with the disappointments which all men meet, had survived the friends of my youth and early manhood and was living on memory; both were at a time of life when men rarely form new attachments; I know not what drew us together. Our unlikeness may have helped the tie which formed so silently that we may have been unconscious of its strength till it was touched by death. This blow intensifies the solitude of my life. I cast my eyes about to see how lonely I stand. To my friend was given a clear steady hope of the future; he died with its glow on the opening pinions of his spirit. We may not regret him. His career was completed. He lived and died a man: every inch, fibre, instinct, was pure, manly, strong, brave, gentle, tender, loving. True

to his generation, true to his kind, true to his country, true to his God, true counsellor, true friend, true lover, true husband, true father, what more can be said? To the eager friendless youth I point the example of Paschal's early life. To the timid, doubting, hesitating citizen in hours of peril and darkness, I offer the example of his riper years. To the lawyer, old or young, his whole career. His life was brave, blameless. His country had his best exertions. He leaves his name and memory to his children, the wealth of his example, the lesson of his life, to all our children."

After my dear father was buried in the Rock Creek Cemetery that I loved so well, Washington lost its charm for me, and only of late years has my heart turned back to it again.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE JOY OF GIVING

Many charities are but dreams.

Now and then a blessed dream comes true—a motherless child finds a mother ; or a home is built for the homeless.

WHAT a beautiful everlasting monument Mr Corcoran has given to the memory of his wife in the Louise Home in Washington. Those poor ladies of genteel lineage and former grandeur, who are unfitted to work, and too proud to beg, are through his hospitality rendered for the remainder of their lives free from care. If Heaven ever gives me riches, my charities are all mapped out. The first would be for governesses, those self-sacrificing beings, who have been obliged to crush out individuality, and subordinate themselves all their lives to other people. Two thousand pounds annually, would support ten worthy women. To each would be given her own little income, one hundred pounds a year, to spend as she liked. There would be no house with rules and regulations, but freedom at last—and there is nothing so sweet in the whole world as freedom. And for men, I should establish, in my father's dear name, a Law School with a simple home attached, where poor young men could become first-class lawyers, with a small sum of money at the end to carry them to that big-hearted West in America whose wide arms are encouragingly opened to the stranger and new-comer.

My father, who was a sentimentalist, used to say that his charity would be a bank of honour, where industrious young men of twenty-one could borrow money to start themselves in married life. He was a firm believer in marriage, and above all in early marriages. He said if wild oats must be sown, it was better after the children were born, for then they

would be healthy, and a comfort to the mother. But he was always sanguine that an early marriage would deprive a man of his oatsing appetite.

The happiest and most satisfactory charity, of course, is that which can be personally superintended. I know of such a one. When last in New York I met Mr and Mrs Frank Deems. They were married when he was nineteen and she was fifteen, and they just happened to be two minds with but a single thought—that of benefitting less fortunate humanity than themselves. I should like to change their names from Deems to Greatheart—it would suit them better. Mr Deems is a genius in the railway line, receiving for his services a big salary—and this is part of the way in which he so nobly spends it. He selects twelve poor boys of ability and invention, and educates them in whatever bent of life seems to promise success. And he has adopted five others—one of them, a poor delicate little child, had the offer of another home after he had been mothered by Mrs Deems for a few weeks, and when she told him he was going away to a nice new mother and father she noticed the child seemed intensely quiet, and said nothing. A little later she found him sobbing convulsively in a room by himself, and when she asked him what was the matter he proudly replied, “Nothing.” And then he lost control of his little breaking heart, and said, “I don’t want a new mother—I want you for my mother always,” and he caught her closely around her neck and cried; and she cried, and of course he stayed, and is now, after many years, a model, appreciative, and devoted son. They are not childless people; their only son, a popular and successful doctor, sympathizes with his father’s philanthropic work.

We crossed in the “Cedric” together, and I never saw the popularity of any two people made so manifest as that of the Greathearts. Their two state rooms were lined with roses. Roses red, and roses white, roses pink, and roses yellow, gave forth each their different fragrance, and jostled and crowded each other in myriads. The floors were covered with large and small baskets of fruit; and here let me thank Mr Green

and Mr Robinson, as their fruit and flowers were transferred to my state rooms, cards and all. I hope the son by choice had remembered his mother, for while she was in London we went together and selected a beautiful carved gold ruby-set ring for him. It was her first visit to England, and yet this dear devoted Madame Greatheart, instead of seeing London as she wished to do, spent the major portion of her time in shopping for her children, and for her troop of friends, buying for each and all some lovely souvenir. She is good to look at, this generous lady: her healthy, handsome exterior, her sweet eyes, and childlike smile, are indications of her warm and tender heart. Like every natural woman, she loves pretty clothes, jewels, laces, feathers and furbelows, but she can always deny herself and put the vanities aside to give to others.

Mr Greatheart has a large library of scrap books compiled by himself. We talked and talked on the voyage, and when we were for the moment silent, Madame Greatheart would suggest poems of his liking to him, and with his splendid memory, as robust as his physique, he amused us by the hour. Does he remember, I wonder, how I wept over :

She was only a pup when I first picked her up,
 One night in this town in a storm ;
 But I mind that she cried like the nor'-easter sighed,
 From my breast which was ragged but warm.

I'd been round the world, been battered and swirled,
 In camps and in ships from a boy ;
 But not one ever cared how my barque ever fared
 When tossed in the storm like a toy.

I had no one to love—all I loved were above—
 When I heard Lizy bark in the gale.
 So I stooped and picked up the forsook little pup,
 And for port with the outcast set sail.

'Twere a long time ago—ten or twelve year or so—
 But we've loved and divided our hoard,
 And she's been faithful as I, mate, will be by and bye,
 If I'm but took up by the Lord.

When I come to his gate some wild night pretty late,
A castout who nobody knows,
P'raps he'll take me up, as I did the pup—
Now, maty, what do you suppose ?

Ah, that kind o' cheers and drives out the fears
I've had since the pup left my side.
She went out the same way we will all go some day—
She just licked my hand, then she died.

She were outcast, but true, and the Lord knows it too,
She deserves all up there we can win.
Now, if me and the pup at his gate, mate, fetch up,
Do you think, maty, he'll take us in ?

Rose Stahl is a valued friend of the Greathearts. They have been to all her important first nights—twenty-nine “Chorus Ladies” in all—and could not of course leave out London, so they just packed, and came across with her in the “Cedric.” She, too, belongs to the Greatheart family by virtue of wisdom, modesty and sympathy. It was my privilege, as the darkies say, “to hope her up,” for she was very doubtful and fearful of a London audience, and that queer public who have refused so many American successes, but I felt that the “Chorus Lady” could not fail to appeal to and delight all English people, and I boldly prophesied this again and again to Rose Stahl, and my prophesy came true.

I am an American ever and always, in spite of my dear love for England, and the first time I saw Rose Stahl in “The Chorus Lady” was really a revelation to me, and also one of the happiest nights of my life. In the first place I had not been home in fifteen years, and it was hot, and I love the heat, so I wore a thin grey muslin, and I love grey. Then I dined with the Pages (the Thomas Nelsons) and I love the Pages, and they gave me a real American dinner—fried chicken, green corn, soft shell crabs, water melon and ice cream—and Charley Bryan of my youth, now the Hon. C. F. Bryan, Minister to Belgium and an agreeable diplomatist, whom I had not seen since I danced with him in my girlhood, in his beautiful mother's house in Washington—she was tall, pensive-looking,

wore long curls at either side of her face, black velvet, old lace, and fine jewels—joined us afterwards, and we four went to the theatre to see Rose Stahl, who was playing her great success of "The Chorus Lady." I had never even heard of her, or the play, but from the moment she appeared her incisive individuality gripped me, and she was a revelation of naturalness, and the essence of humour. The modern American slang was delightful to my ear, and I understood it by instinct. What a description Patricia O'Brian gives of the Chorus Girl's smile when she is tired and downhearted! "It's the smile that's hard. Fancy standing with your foot pointing a quarter past six and looking like the cat that's swallowed the canary!" I've very often seen that galvanized smile on the lips of sad gay women, at the jolly Savoy Hotel suppers, and other depressing gay places. Rose Stahl with her cameo-like features looks like a younger Sarah Bernhardt, and she has, like her, a beautiful golden voice—full, resonant, capable of many variations, plaintive, gay, humorous, scornful, womanly, or tender, and perfectly produced from a strong throat. She is primarily an intellectual actress, and one of decided originality. Her comedy, like all true comedy, has tears at close call. When I laughed the tears fell before I had finished. I followed her every mood and movement, in perfect understanding, and I sighed with regret when the curtain came down, and shut beloved Patricia O'Brien from my sight. And I might have thought my admiration exaggerated owing to the fortunate home coming, and the atmosphere surrounding me that particular night, but the next night I went with another friend, good-looking, black-visaged John Savage, and it was possible for me to regard the play less, and Rose Stahl more, and she impressed me as a far greater actress than I had at first thought her. When the other characters spoke—Dan Mallory, Crawford, and her sister Norah—she listened as intently, and with as swiftly changing an expression as if it was reality and not make-believe. There was no smallest detail slurred or wanting, and the whole performance was that of a great character study by an inspired but

careful and sincere artist. It was my intention to write and say how her performance had moved me, but—procrastination—the impulse passed, and only after two years we became acquainted, and the woman impressed me even more than the artist. I have never known anyone possessing greater individuality or one more free from the weaknesses of the ordinary woman than Rose Stahl. She is surprisingly free from vanity—she says laughingly, “My mother says Rose has good teeth and a good disposition, but she isn’t pretty.” And she is even without vanity of her artistry, or of her wit, which is keen and trenchant—or of her strong common-sense, which is so rare. And with all her brilliant success she must have very many sad moments, for her searching eyes look right through sham, falseness, pretension, and deceit; she sees life as it is, and people as they are—not always a pleasant sight by any means. She herself is sincere, unpretentious, straightforward, and courageous, and yet the most feminine of women. Tenderly attached to her family, fond of children and flowers, grateful for affection and intuitive to a painful degree. Her father is a journalist, and when she was a child he was poor and life was a struggle with a big family to bring up and educate, and she noticed when one of the children asked for a new pair of shoes his already careworn face looked more anxious, so she resolved to tread lightly on her shoes that they might last a long, long time. Now Fortune showers gold upon her, and she can buy a new pair of shoes every day if she likes, but she treads lightly still, for fear of stepping on the susceptibilities of those who are easily hurt. She has learned the most difficult lesson of life for a woman—her eyes penetrate to the root of evil, and seeing, she understands and forgives. She leads from choice “the simple life,” without falling from grace—the life which is so much advocated and so little followed. She eats no meat at all, and sparingly of other food, drinks nothing but water, is reasonable and economical in her dress, and sleeps the sleep of the just. She desires no possessions except plenty of books, for she is a constant, omnivorous and appreciative reader. She never goes out

to suppers or dinners, and has no desire to be in evidence, or for notoriety. Her success has not been attained by advertisement, but by legitimate means—the hardest, most painstaking and intellectual work. She wrote me in answer to a letter reproaching her for forgetfulness :

“ No, dear, dear and beautiful Mascotte, I am *not* fickle—only worn out and oh, so tired ! I am sailing to-morrow on our ‘ Cedric ’ and am hoping that the trip may bring me some strength and rest. How I wish I might have gone to Italy where you are and have a few quiet, restful weeks with you. But I open in Boston in the middle of August and that is why I must hurry away.

“ As for the London season, I can only say with all my heart and soul, ‘ God bless them—they have been far better to me than I had ever dared to dream they might be ! ’ And I shall be waiting the opportunity to come back again.

“ There is much I would like to say to you—but I hope that we will meet soon. For your goodness to me I shall always have an unbounded gratitude—and quite apart from all your goodness to me, I love you very, very much.—
Auf Wiedersehn,
ROSE ”

And as she belongs in a measure to England for their appreciation of her and will not rest until she returns to reap fresh laurels, I give this letter, which was meant for no eyes but mine, and I say to her, not “ Auf Wiedersehn,” but “ Auf baldiges Wiedersehn.”

CHAPTER XIX

AN UNQUIET GHOST

Let each man wheel with steady sway
Round the task that rules the day,
And do his best.

GOETHE

UNTIL we lose them we never realize the stupendous force of youth, health and hope. When I went to New York to live—that great cormorant of a city of noise, and din, and greed, and hardness, and struggle—I had only fifty dollars in all the world, my little child dependent upon me, and I do not suppose any creature on earth was less equipped for a remorseless fight with the world than myself.

In the first place, I was born and brought up in the South. All my ancestors were Southern people, and their women for generations had been protected, considered and loved, and had never had to battle for themselves. And Nature is meagre (unless to the Napoleons, Shakespeares, and Gladstones, and those she lavishly endows) : in giving us one thing she takes away another. I have what a friend of mine calls "merciless logic," and for a woman my reasoning powers are well developed, but I have no intuitive faculty whatever. I know nothing about human nature, except by a sequence of events, and a logical deduction. My first impulse is to like everybody that I meet ; I have no instinct of protecting myself from men or women who are either false or untrustworthy. My judgment of people is of the worst. But in spite of my many disillusionments and disappointments in human nature, my inexhaustible well of

credulity and trustfulness can always be drawn upon, and happily I rebound after each deception.

New York, of all places, with its cosmopolitan population and its heartlessness, is the last place for an unprotected woman of my temperament, and yet I had little to complain of at that period of my life, for I was able to make warm and valued friends there.

In the beginning I hoped to keep my little son, Toodie, with me, and we went to live in a lodging-house in 14th Street. I paid four dollars a week for a large bedroom, and it served also as a sitting-room; we went across the street to a cheap boarding-house for our meals; and doing a little newspaper work and reading plays for A. M. Palmer just kept body and soul together, but I was very young, and hope loomed large before me.

The lodging-house was well furnished, exquisitely clean, and I was quite comfortable there, when something mysterious occurred which necessitated my finding other rooms.

On going one afternoon to see a friend of mine who lived a few doors away—a flower painter—she said to me: “ You have had a suicide in your house, haven’t you ? ”

Greatly surprised, I said, “ No, I’m sure not—I have heard nothing of it.”

But she insisted that she had read a full account of it in the papers, and when I went home I asked the housemaid if she knew anything about it. She turned red and said, Yes,—that a nephew of Jefferson Davis had shot himself a week before. I then knew that he had occupied the room next to mine. He was very unfortunate in business, and it seemed that for weeks he had been making up his mind to do the deed, for the housemaid told me that sometimes she had found the pistol on the mantelpiece, sometimes on the washing-stand, and sometimes on the dressing-table—as if he had picked it up and re-considered his dire resolution and had gone on fighting bitter Fate a little longer.

He, like myself, took his meals outside, and as he frequently went away a few days on business, when his door

was locked, nothing was thought of it, and when the suicide was discovered he had been dead four or five days—and, poor soul, unselfish to the last, he had taken his overcoat and put it under his head, doubled it up as a pillow, and managed in taking his life not to make the smallest bloodstain on the bed or the carpet.

I remembered that I had often seen a sad, cavernous-eyed man going up and down the stairs, and I had more than once thought I would speak to him, he looked so melancholy and despairing, but the convention of life kept me from it—I was a young widow, and was then trying to consider my dignity—but I have always regretted not having put out a hand of fellowship and of sympathy to that pursued and lonely creature. Convention is after all a most hateful and unnecessary and sometimes cruel thing. The older I grow and the more I see of life, the less sympathy I have with it.

There is neither fear nor superstition in my composition, and as I was getting a little more work I sent for the landlord and told him that I would take the suicide's room as my bedroom and turn my bedroom into a sitting-room. The next day this arrangement was made.

The first night I slept in the room I was awakened by a long sighing groan which seemed to be just at the side of my bed. Curiously enough I was not in the least afraid—I only hoped the noise would continue so that I might rouse the servants and the landlord and his wife, and have them listen to this strange portent, and understand that it was not my imagination. The groans, however, continued, and I awoke the two housemaids and a young army officer who lodged on the same floor, and asked him to go downstairs and request the landlord and his wife to come up to my room. He did, and the landlord decided that it was either a chimney-pot out of order whirling round and round, and making an unearthly noise, or that next door the doctor, who was a specialist for nervous diseases, had a patient who was either very ill and suffering, or else a madman.

The groans never ceased, so the mattress was dragged off

the bed and placed on the floor of my sitting-room, and towards morning I dropped into a worried sleep.

Immediately after breakfast I went to see the doctor and asked him if he had any patients. He said that no one lived on the fourth floor of his house at all, as his family was very small, consisting only of himself and his wife, who occupied the second floor, and the servants had their bedrooms on the third floor.

During the day we had a man to come and look at the chimney-pots, but they were all in excellent order, so that night I tried sleeping in the room again. About twelve o'clock the groans re-commenced, and the same thing happened the following night. Then I determined to move. The landlord was exceedingly angry—he said that I had taken the rooms for the winter, and threatened to sue me for the rent, but I did move, and in a blinding snow storm at that. I do not know whether I believe in supernatural phenomena or not—I only relate what happened as an unpleasant, inconvenient and inexplicable experience.

Never in my life have I seen a harder woman than the woman who kept this lodging-house. The unfortunate being who committed suicide had lived in her house five or six years, and her only thought was, that he should have drowned himself in the East River, or gone to a hotel to blow his brains out. And it seems to me of all lonely and heart-breaking places in the world, without friends, New York is the loneliest and the most relentless.

My little son seemed to realize my position at this time, although I was always gay before him, and surely no mother ever had a more devoted or a kinder protector. I used sometimes to sit up writing until two and three o'clock in the morning, and when I crept into bed, cold and tired, he never failed to awake and put his thin little arm under my neck and say to me, "Poor girl—poor girl! You must be so tired." He made friends very readily, and always had plenty of toys and plenty of amusement, but I think he felt the seriousness of life, nevertheless.

We used very often to go to Philadelphia and to

Baltimore to visit friends there, and I remember admonishing him not to talk to people in the cars, as frequently it was only a subterfuge for some one to bore me with conversation, and especially he was to recollect never to answer any questions, no matter what they were. One day going to Baltimore I noticed a man who had been talking to the child observing me with a most peculiar expression. Not impertinent, but certainly extremely curious, and rather amused. When I got out of the train I said, "Toodie, did that man ask you any questions?"

He said, "Yes, he did, but I remembered what you told me and I didn't answer him."

I said, "What did he ask you?"

He said, "He asked me if you were my mother, and I told him there were reasons *why* I couldn't tell him."

I have often wondered what description the man himself gave of the interview.

After a few months, it became plain that a boarding-house was no place to bring up a child, and so my one friend and sweetheart had to go away to school. It was a perfectly heart-breaking parting, both for him and for me. I took him down to the nuns in Orange, New Jersey, and left him with the heaviest heart in the world, and I could only stand it two days in New York without going to see him again. I asked him how he liked it, and he said it was dreadful, and I said, "Well, there are lots of boys here who have left their mothers," and his answer was, "Yes, they have, but I have been talking to them and they are not so *used* to their mothers and to their mother's friends, as I am to you. I am so used to you that I don't think I can stay here without running away."

This was in the early spring, and in the summer the nuns let me come as a boarder, so that I could see him every day.

CHAPTER XX

MY BELOVED MARY

“ Oh, those happy days, when we were miserable ! ”

JUSTIN MCCARTHY

JUST before I went down to the convent Dr Mallory came to see me and asked if I knew any place where a lady could go who was in the very deepest grief, and I recommended the convent as quiet and prettily situated, and the nuns as being exceedingly sympathetic and kind. I asked what the lady's grief was. He said, “ Don't laugh ” — and then he told me hesitatingly that she had lost a Pekinese Spaniel. I love animals as much as anybody in the world, but hard work seems to give life its true perspective, and I must say that, in spite of his admonition, I did laugh at her irreconcilable grief.

The lady went down to the convent a day or two in advance of myself. I discovered that she was one of the friends of my girlhood, and the wife of a captain in the navy, now a well-known admiral. She was dressed in deep mourning—a cashmere heavily trimmed in crêpe, and a crêpe hat with a drooping veil. The dog during its illness had one of the best physicians in New York and two trained nurses, and after its death had been laid to rest under a carved marble headstone reciting its virtues. The lady had told an innocent sister that her grief was for a child—a Japanese baby whom she had adopted. There is always something of the eternal child in every nun, and this one was both sympathetic and curious. She asked the lady the baby's age, and whether it was a boy or a girl. The grief-stricken

mère adoptive said it was a girl, and when the sister asked her if it had been baptized and she said "No," the nun was shocked and grieved to think the adopted child would not meet its mother in heaven.

The sister repeated this conversation to me, and said, "It is such a curious thing that if she had wanted to adopt an infant she should have adopted a yellow Japanese baby, and of course her grief is mingled with a terrible remorse that she neglected the child's baptism."

I said, "Don't you worry about that baby. It was a monster with a black snub nose, saucer eyes, and covered all over with black and white hair."

The sister turned pale with horror and said, "How shocking! She adopted a hairy monster!"

"Yes," I said, "she did, and, as you know, loved it devotedly."

The sister tapped her forehead significantly, and after this the convent was quite resigned to the death of the child, and I never disclosed anything further. The poor lady is dead long ago, and I hope buried, as she wished to be, by her Japanese darling.

In the autumn I returned to New York and joined forces with a friend from Virginia, and we went to live in a large boarding-house which was comparatively comfortable. At any rate we had each other, and I never knew a better friend than Mary Agnew. She has the loyalty of a man combined with the tenderness of a woman, and an unchangeableness and intensity of affection that I have never seen equalled. It is hard for us with our finite natures to understand everything, but I have no thought in my mind, no high aspiration, no sin, or sorrow, or joy, or hope, that my friend is not capable of understanding, and, if necessary, of forgiving. It is a wonderful thing to feel there is one being in the world from whom you need have no slightest secret, and that whatever you have said or done in your life will not lessen the love which has been given to you in the fulness and generosity of a truly noble soul—and neither years of separa-

tion nor of divided interests have made the least difference in our friendship.

We were truly in those days a mine of help and strength to each other. I always dressed in mourning—not that I was mourning always, but black was the cheapest and the easiest dress, and in a sort of costume designed by myself, which was something between that of a widow and a nurse. It consisted of a perfectly plain black skirt and bodice, white linen collar and cuffs, a small black close fitting bonnet, and a long heavy black cloak. In this way even with my small means I was enabled to look neat and clean, and for years, with all my intense love of pretty things, I never went in a shop or scarcely looked in a shop window.

Mary, with her generous, handsome presence, abundance of hair and robust health, had rather the flamboyant taste of the South in dress, and I remember one winter she economized and bought a most terrible bonnet. The whole of it was made of huge pearl beads, and there were two or three large white feathers nodding on the top. I really did feel our friendship tremble in the balance with those waving feathers, and finally I had to speak my mind, but in vain. Mary's heart had gone out to that bonnet, and it was really dearer than anything in the world to her except myself. About this time the lady who kept the boarding-house had made enough money to retire, and it was necessary for us to find new quarters. Mary was occupied all day down town at the post-office and left the moving to me, and one or two old friends who used to take us to the theatre and came very often to see us suggested my managing to lose that pearl bonnet of Mary's in the moving. "Oh, I wouldn't dare," I said—but somehow in spite of the care that I really *did* give, that bonnet was lost. Mary always suspected me. She said, "Elizabeth, you know you didn't like that bonnet, and I have noticed that things of mine you particularly dislike disappear. Now why? You always lay it to a dishonest chambermaid, but why should people who are dishonest take my things that you set your face against?" I acknowledged the logic of this argument, but nevertheless my con-

science was as clear as crystal about that pearl bonnet. I have often wondered at its end. Luckily Mary was so handsome that it was impossible for her really to spoil her noble appearance, but she did give its power of endurance continual tests. Now she has had so much sorrow and such heart-breaks that all the gay, youthful, gorgeous taste is gone, and she dresses as quietly as a Quaker. Oh, dear me, as Justin M'Carthy says, "those happy, happy days when we were miserable!" for we had youth, and hope, and health, and ambition, and dreams that never came true.

Desultory journalistic work in New York is perfectly terrible, and I was kept continually on the rack, and finally for a time I could get absolutely nothing to do. I had knocked figuratively and literally at the door of every editor's sanctum in New York, and I was in utter despair, until poor David brought me luck.

Mary had a cousin whom she called "David" on account of his tenderness and his charm, for that was not his real name, and on telling him how worried I was he wrote me a letter which made me cry my heart out, and sent me a cheque for five hundred dollars. I could only return it, and tell him that it was impossible for me to accept it even as a loan because I saw no prospect of paying it back. I scarcely knew him. It was such a wonderfully kind thing to do; and I got work that very day. Ah me, what a tragic death he met with afterwards! His wife had been an invalid for some years, never leaving her room or her couch, and he was young—not more than thirty-two or thirty-three—full of vitality and a love of pleasure. One night after a supper party he met a handsome woman who belonged to the chorus of one of the theatres. He was going to Albany, New York, for two or three days, and asked her to accompany him. She went, and by some strange turn of fate fell savagely in love with him. He thought it was an experience that would last a day only, but for two years this woman persecuted him until his life ceased to be of any value whatever. He was a millionaire, and he gave her £8000, but this only whetted her appetite for more money

and for a greater revenge. One day she went over to his house and penetrated to the chamber of his poor little invalid, and made such a scene that his wife was ill for weeks; but she understood, and forgave him with her whole heart.

Every morning when he left Brooklyn, where he lived, this Jezebel waited, accompanied him to New York, abused him all the way to his office, and often returned with him at night as far as his own door, all the while making terrible threats. He said to Mary he was sure that in the end this woman would take his life, and Mary said, "If that is true, give her £50,000 or £100,000—your life is worth everything." He was a man who had a host of poor relations in the South and generously supported a number of them. He gave largely to charity, and he had the tenderest and kindest heart I have ever known, but the woman had made him hate her, and he refused to give her another farthing—so one morning on Broadway she came behind him and shot him several times in the back. He staggered into a chemist's shop and leaned on the marble counter with his life blood running down his sleeves and over his gloves, and he died in a few minutes. The woman was never tried as she fell ill in prison and died of pneumonia. Then the New York papers came out and described this man as a leper, who had taken advantage of the youth and innocence of a charming young girl, and a fine story was made of his hardness and heartlessness—but this is the inside truth of that unfortunate affair. Poor David, with his generous soul, his chivalrous nature, and his impossibility of doing a mean or ungentlemanly thing, was killed by one of those harpies, born into the world for the purpose of destruction. He paid for his sin with his life. That was the end.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MAKING OF A JOURNALIST

"The soul grows by leaps and bounds, by throes and throbs. A flash! and glory stands revealed for which you have been groping blindly through the years."

ABOUT this time A. M. Palmer produced the "Parisian Romance" with Richard Mansfield as Baron Chevrial. And he at once made himself and the play famous. After all the critics had written about the play I sent an article to "The New York World." Mr Hurlbert, who was then the editor, published it, and luckily it aroused a little controversy, and later on I received a short note from the editor saying that he would like to see me—and then I went on "The World" at a weekly wage as an ordinary reporter. And the work! Mr Hurlbert never considered me any more than if I had been a strong young man. I was sent at any time, day or night, to this, that, and the other person for interviews. I wrote a long series of articles called "Curious Occupations," which necessitated my seeing half the crooks of New York. And I climbed up factory stairs, went over laundries, hospitals, shops, and manufactories of all kinds, and wrote and wrote about working women and every sort of subject until I had writer's cramp—and I have never entirely escaped from it since.

At the same time I had much for which to thank Mr Hurlbert. He was one of the people who should have been a teacher. His father was, I believe, a professor of sorts in the South. Mr Hurlbert himself had a lucid power of explanation and a quick critical faculty which was unsurpassed. He was a hard master, but a most profitable and

inspiring one. He would cast his eye down a column of copy, take a blue pencil and run ruthlessly through two-thirds of it, and say, "This is all nonsense. Now I'll give you the names of a dozen books to read so that you will see why." And quick as lightning he jotted down the names of the books, and off I went to a library to get them. Now this was most kind, as he was a busy man and a most selfish one, but while I worked under him I felt my mind open exactly as if it had been a bud blossoming into flower, so helpful and so stimulating was his influence. He was at once a ruthless critic and also an encouraging, inspiring one. And he was always optimistic and illuminating, and I never knew anyone who possessed such a fund of knowledge upon every conceivable subject. He was a living, enthusiastic, joyous, intensely interesting encyclopædia. I remember one dazzling evening hearing him give a complete history of Peru, so romantic and entrancingly interesting that a publisher present, with a pencil and half sheet of paper drew up then and there a contract for a book. And from Peru he transported us to Mexico, and opened up mines of gold and silver, and finally the evening closed with half a dozen ghost stories that were magnificently tense and thrilling. As a conversationalist Mr Hurlbert was unsurpassed, as a writer he should have left an immortal name. He was unhappily indifferent, unmethodical, and lacked concentration of purpose, but he possessed both brilliancy and genius. My work was not confined to any one department. He tried me at everything, as he said that in time he would make me into a first-class journalist—and absent-minded as I am, and even lacking in talent, if I had worked long enough under him, so great was my diligence and so anxious was I for success, even this would have come to pass. I remember in a certain Sunday edition of "The World" I had seven columns, and eight columns in another, and I felt myself really advancing in my profession. Then I was given by the Associated Press the description of the Vanderbilt ball to do. It frightened me dreadfully, for I really didn't know where or how to begin, but the happy

idea occurred to me of going to Richard Hunt, the architect who built W. K. Vanderbilt's house in Fifth Avenue, and I went. I was shown into his office, and he turned his very clear, brilliant, intelligent, cold blue eyes on me and said, rather curtly, "Well, what is it you want? I am in a hurry this morning." And I said, "Mr Hunt, I am a struggling journalist, and a bad one, but I have got to go on in the profession because I have myself and my little boy to support, and I have only my pen to do it with. I don't know a thing in the world about architecture, and I have been given the Vanderbilt ball by the Associated Press to report. Now, I ask you, as man to man, to give me an intelligent description of the house—I believe you built it. Will you do it?"

"Yes," he said, "I will. I am busy this morning, but I will put on my hat and take you up to the house now."

And in five minutes we were on a Fifth Avenue stage. As we entered the door Mr Hunt pointed upward and said, "Here is a pendentive dome." "What," I asked, "is a pendentive dome?" "Don't," he said, "ask any questions—just put down what I tell you—but since you have asked, a pendentive dome is one where you stand at the bottom of the house and look straight without interruption to the arch at the top."

Then he kindly gave me letters of introduction to various people who were dancing the quadrilles, and the costumiers who were making the dresses. Mrs Vanderbilt and her husband and Lady Mandeville showed me their costumes, and from that moment, except for the continual work and the constant running about, my description of the great event was made easy for me—and Mrs Vanderbilt invited me to the ball. I told her that I could not accept, on account of the expense, as she wished all the dresses to be so magnificent, but finally she consented to my wearing the habit of a nun. This I could afford, because the black nun's cloth could easily be made over into a summer dress. The white linen bands, veil and crucifix were lent to me by a nun, and I not only did the description for the Associated Press, but

a special description for "The New York World," and many smaller paragraphs that went the round of the provincial press.

Some verses apropos of the nun, who was the humblest and the least-known person at the ball, were sent to "The World," and when I went into the office a day or two later Mr Hurlbert read me with much amusement :

"As from the throng of moving masks
I drew a space apart,
Well known to some, unknown to me
By my imperfect art ;
One in the habit of a nun
Stopped short as in surprise,
And through her domino I saw
Two soft, regarding eyes.

Long looked we both, for half I felt
Her gaze no mischief spoke,
And then it was a woman's hand
Reached to me from the cloak ;
A voice I never heard before
But most sincere and sweet,
Said, ' Ah, my love, do we once more
Touch hand to hand and meet ? ' "

The poet gave rein to his imagination, as there was no domino, nor did the nun say, " Ah, my love, do we once more touch hand to hand and meet ! " These things were all " poetic licence," but at any rate there was a ball, there was a very very tired journalistic nun, and there was a rhymester, if not a poet.

Mr Hurlbert wrote me before the ball :

" 32 WAVERLEY PLACE,
" NEW YORK.

" MY DEAR LADY FROM THE SOUTH,—Your suggestion is an excellent one and shall be duly worked out so that you may see Dazien to-morrow and extract essence of his cynical observations. If you will then write out his tales and send

them to me on Friday that will be quite early enough. I shall hope also to have your tale concerning the stage and all the quadrilles, and in the hope once more that you will not overdo yourself in this treacherous Northern spring weather which smiles but to betray,—Always most sincerely yours,

“WILLIAM HENRY HURLBERT

“P.S.—The portrait you were so good as to let me look at is not only an admirable piece of technical work, but a most interesting portrait of a singularly sweet and noble face, a face out of keeping with the costume of our times and belonging—if ever a face belonged it is this—to the ages of belief. It gives me much to think of and to say.”

(This was a small portrait of my father done by a friend. I wanted Mr Hurlbert's opinion of the work. Dazien was the costumier making many of the dresses for the Vanderbilt ball.)

And after the ball :

“32 WAVERLEY PLACE,
“NEW YORK, *Tuesday*.

“MY DEAR LADY FROM THE SOUTH,—In looking over all the notices this morning of the ball, I see so many little and great blunders that I think it will be worth while to use your additional notes to-morrow. Pray see Mrs Vanderbilt and Lady Mandeville to-day and go over the whole story with them and make any really important corrections. The decorations might be touched up a little bit. I hope you will not be too tired to do this, and if you are not I shall be very glad to have your notes as early as possible. Could you possibly take a cab and drive down here and leave them with the Assistant Editor should I not be here at 10 P.M. ? I expect, however, to be here at that time, and with my best thanks for the admirable work you have done and of which too much cannot be said,—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

“WILLIAM HENRY HURLBERT”

Mr Hurlbert's letter amused me not a little with its polite affectation of “taking a cab,” for in those days a cab to “The

World " office would have cost at least three dollars, and I could no more have afforded that amount of money than I now can afford to hire a motor. He was a perfect genius in getting work out of people. I am sure that he kept me employed fourteen hours out of the twenty-four while I was on "The World." My very spirit used to faint with fatigue, but absolute poverty, with a child to support, is a wonderful goad to a worn-out body. And he never had occasion to complain of lateness, procrastination, or indifference. He said to me once, "I believe you love drudgery." What a sigh I stifled, before I made a brave answer, for I would willingly have worked all night, and all day, before losing my job.

CHAPTER XXII

A CHANGE OF OCCUPATION

“ And now we believe in evil
Where once we believed in good,
The world, the flesh and the devil
Are easily understood.”

AT this period Constance Fenimore Woolson, a novel writer of excellence and of charm, was looming on the horizon, and as our reviewer of books suddenly disappeared to the country without leave, in addition to my more active work quantities of books arrived for me to review, among them “ The Colonel’s Marriage,” by this author, published by the Harpers.

The scene was laid in Virginia, and I wrote of the book with keen appreciation, and a paragraph from “ The World ” was much quoted, and attracted the eye of the publishers, the Harpers, and was helpful later in getting me my place with them as MS. reader.

When “ The World ” changed hands Mr Pulitzer offered me a better salary than Mr Hurlbert, but society reporting, which he wanted me to do, is completely out of my line. I am like the man who said, “ There are three things I never can remember : names, faces—and I forget the third thing I can’t remember.” I always forget clothes and decorations, and I, too, forget the third thing I can’t remember—feasts, maybe.

At any rate, I left “ The World,” and Mrs Bradley Fiske, a daughter of Joseph Harper, and a most fascinating, sympathetic woman (at one time we always held a weekly symposium together, and sang duets, and talked and laughed

and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves—I love her voice and her ways), gave me a letter to her father. I was shown into his office, and after placing a seat with old-fashioned courtesy, he said, “Well, what is it? Josie says only nice things about you, but that isn’t enough, I take it.”

I said, “It’s a great deal to me, Mr Harper, but I want more—and it’s work, of course.”

“Ah,” said Mr Harper, “can you write?”

“No,” I said, “I can’t really.”

His eyes twinkled. “Well, then,” he asked, “what are you going to do for us?”

“I don’t quite know,” I said. “I thought maybe you would find out. I can sweep, and dust, and wash, and clean beautifully.”

“I see that,” he said, “but can’t you write the least little bit?”

“Well,” I said, “I’m a sort of incompetent writer, you use one of my book reviews in a catalogue.”

“Do we?” he said, looking really pleased, and the catalogue was sent for, he read the paragraph, and said, “It’s better than I expected. Now you go home and I’ll send you the MS. of a book which our readers have disagreed about, and on your opinion rests a tentative engagement of six months as one of our readers is away on vacation.”

So off I sped, and an hour later the MS. had arrived, and how I loved that book! It was so definitely bad and impossible. I remember but one thing in it, a young Guardsman, a kind of curly-headed, muscular, passionate Apollo, had been making red-hot love to a married lady, who had on one occasion at least yielded to his fierce embraces, although her subconscious mind really loved her husband, who of course had neglected her; but with repentance of heart, a sad expression, and patches of grey on each temple, he was returning home after a temporary separation from his tempted wife and his child. And then the question arose what to do with the Apollo of the passionate but faithful heart? He was strong, but he had to die, and the author disdained the good old wheezes of battle, heart disease, and

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railway disasters. So with heart aflame, and perfect health, the Guardsman unsuspectingly walked in the Zoo (it would seem an innocent amusement)—the London Zoo—and there through the carelessness of one of the keepers (how I thanked that keeper) a magnificent lion of the jungle was trotting around seeking whom he might devour. Oh, what a licking of chops and swishing of tail when he saw the Guardsman, and then the hand to paw encounter between them in a part of the Zoo where no one ever came! The fight was long and terrible, keen human intelligence and trained strength against wild beast force. But the British lion conquered, as he always does. There was the horrible scrunching of a human skull, the brave blue eyes were closed for ever—the lion gave a great roar of triumph, his tail stood perfectly upright—and the dark gentleman (who presumably never went to the Zoo) could come home in perfect safety to the arms of his wife. I am glad the management of the Zoo has improved since this incident, for I have been there so very very often, and have never met even the smallest animal walking at large.

Could the author have made the same mistake about the lion that the little girl did who went walking in Central Park? She was incurably mendacious, and coming home she said, "Mother, I met a lion to-day walking in Central Park."

"Now, Mary," her mother said, "you know that's a lie. Go in your room and pray for forgiveness."

The child obediently went, returning in a few minutes with a beatific expression, and when her mother asked if she had prayed God to be forgiven she said, "I did, and God said to me, 'Never mind, Miss Jones, I've often met that dog in Central Park and have mistaken him myself for a lion.'"

My tentative engagement with the Harpers resolved itself into two or three years, and I left them with very real regret. The work was continual and rather trying to the eyes, as in those days the typewriter was little used, but I could take my own time, and everyone was very kind. I used regularly

to ask for an increase of salary, which I never got, as Joseph Harper always answered, "You have enough to live on, and Dobbin will turn up soon, and then you will read no more MSS."

At this time the broken friendship between the North and the South was being mended, and the Harpers were displaying a most generous and interested spirit towards the South. Mr Joseph Harper had sent both his sons to a Virginia College, and Southern writers were encouraged and even sought after. A novel dealing with the South was sent to Franklin Square with the scene laid in Maryland. It was clever, but there were a good many pin pricks for Southern people in it, and much division of opinion among the readers, who were none of them from the South, when finally the book was sent to me for a final decision, accompanied by a note from Mr Conant to say I was to read it with unusual care.

What was my horror on reading the book, to find the author to be a man who, without my personal acquaintance, had written some unjust and unkind newspaper paragraphs about me. And I wished from my heart that my enemy had *not* written a book. I sat down, however, and read every line with, I hope, a dispassionate outlook.

Mr Joseph Harper had told me when I first went to them as a manuscript reader, there were three things they required in a book: It was to be of mercantile value, it was to be interesting, and it was to be clean.

Well, my enemy's book was not unclean but coarse, and I marked a good many passages and said that with these eliminated, or at any rate greatly toned down, the book, since it had unusual interest, and genuine cleverness, should by all means be published. I must confess I stretched my good opinion as far as it would go, because I really thought it somewhat dry and lacking in heart, but it seemed such a mean thing to stab even an enemy in the back, that I could not conscientiously give an antagonistic opinion.

When the author saw the passages, he said to Mr Conant, "Your reader seems to strike at my very personality"; how-

ever, he drastically edited the offending paragraphs and the book was published, but in spite of all its merits was never a success, and they always spoke of it reproachfully at the Harpers as "your book."

Now that I have grown older and more practical, I fear my chivalrous Southern sentiments were more useful to my unconscious enemy than to my employers. I was over scrupulous. I never mind a fair fight in an open field, but I have a whole-souled horror of the stab of the assassin.

CHAPTER XXIII

LOVING MEMORIES

"BRER RABBIT (Prisoner). 'If I'm gwine to be sacaficed, Brer Wolf, I wants to be sacaficed de right way.'

"BRER WOLF. 'What's de right way, Brer Rabbit?'

"BRER RABBIT. 'Shut yo' eyes, fold yo' hands under yo' chin, an' say: "Bless us an' bine us, an' put us in a place whar de ole boy can't fine us."'

"When Brer Wolf open his eyes, whar was Brer Rabbit?"

UNCLE REMUS

DURING my exile in the North, the stories of Uncle Remus by Joel Chandler Harris were of the greatest comfort to me. I remember so well the first time that dear Uncle Remus became my friend. I was terribly homesick and alone in New York. If I shut my eyes, I could in imagination fairly smell the odour of the magnolia and the oleander, and see the mimosa burst into bloom. One night, in the midst of a heavy snowstorm, I went around the corner for a breath of fresh air to a little circulating library, and almost the first book I put my hand upon, was a collection of darkey stories beginning with the Rabbit and the Tar Baby, and at once I was transported back into the past. I could see a big, dim room with no light in it, except the light from the logs of a great open fire, and sitting just in front of the hearth was a broad shouldered negro woman with the children clustered all round her, the youngest with its head pillowed on her broad bosom, and there we all were, cousins and sisters and brothers, listening to the story of the Tar Baby, and the Wolf, and the Rabbit, and the Fox, and the animals were talking through her in their wise and witty way until our bedtime,

when Mammy heard our prayers, said good night, and gave each of us her tender blessing until the morning.

I met Mr Harris once, and there was some talk between Major Pond and myself at that time, about my giving a few readings in negro dialect, and Mr Harris wrote me apropos of this subject :

“ CONSTITUTION,
“ *7th January 1881.*

“ DEAR AND GRACIOUS LADY,—Mr Finch turned the matter over to Mr Howell Glen of the Lecture Committee, and I was under the impression he had opened correspondence with you. I should be extremely sorry not to have an opportunity of hearing you interpret Uncle Remus. I have my own opinion as to the absurdity of the interest taken in the book at the North, but the interest undoubtedly exists, and I would be overjoyed to see you reap some of the benefits of it. There is no reason in the world why you should not. I feel that you can do the affair more than justice.

“ I trust you will overlook or at any rate pardon any lack of politeness on my part during our interview. The consciousness of my extreme awkwardness is an affliction that I have striven in vain to overcome, and in addition to this you humbled me to the dust by your tributes to Uncle Remus. These things and the fact that your face (if I knew you better I would say your lovely face), and your voice, and gestures are such startling reminders of some one I knew a great while ago, must have given me an appearance of great constraint. I really felt like one in a dream. Well, well, we won't get in a controversy about poor old Mr Carlyle. He has doubtless overcome you with his plug-ugly vocabulary and his wonderful facility of humbuggery. He never made anybody happy in this world, and if we deny him remorse what a terrible spectacle we set up. By all means let us consider that he was capable of remorse. We do not deny that to the ordinary criminal.

“ The Scribners, I mean the Editors of ‘ Scribner,’ are

pressing me to write a serial based on Slave life at the South. It is a matter that has been worrying and fretting me for several years, but I haven't the confidence to undertake it.

"Is it necessary for me to add to this hasty scrawl the statement that I would be more than glad to hear from you again?—Yours very sincerely,

"JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS"

And later on I sent him an article about his stories for approval, and he wrote again :

"29th October 1883.

"DEAR AND GRACIOUS LADY,—I received your letter Saturday, and I seize the first opportunity to thank you for the sympathetic tone and intention of the MSS. you enclose, but to tell you the truth it rather saddens me to read it. I am perfectly sure of your appreciation as far as its sincerity is concerned, but your article reads almost like a burlesque on my hopes and desires. Knowing my own limitations, knowing just where I have failed, and where in the very nature of things I must continue to fail, it is rather a curious sensation to be credited by you with the very things I have longed to accomplish.

"You ask for some suggestions. I will give you one from the newspaper point of view. Your sketch is too personal, and too enthusiastic. The literary tone of the 'Tribune' is as high as any of the Magazines, and such praise as you have given me will not fit it. The 'Tribune' is one of the few papers I read through and through, and you may be sure I speak by the card. The men who make the 'Tribune' might all have been distinguished in literature, and some of them have already become so. Uncle Remus has never been noticed in the 'Tribune.' The first book, I mean. I have been told that this was because the paper was not on good terms with the Appletons, but I prefer to believe that the 'Tribune' judged the book on

its own merits. If it was what you and some other very partial friends believe it to be, the 'Tribune' would have discovered it. I do not know who presides over the Literary Department since the death of Dr Ripley, but no mistakes of judgment are ever made there. It thus happens that the 'Tribune,' without making much fuss about it, is one of the most influential papers in American literature. Now the forthcoming Remus book is no better than the first, and I question very much whether the 'Tribune' will allow anything to be said about it in its literary department, not because the Editor and his Assistants are opposed to Southern literature, to quote the idea of some of our Southern lunatics, but because they are jealous of American literature. The line must be drawn somewhere and why not at the Remus trash.

"I am telling you this to warn you against a possible disappointment.

"Mr Reid's note, which I return, is kind, and I have no doubt the new book will be considered on its real merits, just as the first one was. You must remember that a knack of writing dialect bears about the same relation to literature that the Negro Minstrel bears to Salvini. I know that you really love Uncle Remus. I sincerely trust that my candour is not disagreeable. I am simply striving to prevent you from placing too high an estimate on our Uncle Remus in your article for the 'Tribune.' It is to be considered by those whose judgments are not biassed by any pleasing or happy recollections of the old plantation system. In other words, your article will be judged not only on its own merits, but in relation to the merits of the new Remus book. You are handicapped at the start and you will find it necessary to exercise both caution and reserve.

"I enclose a note to Mr Osgood. When you receive the advance sheets, I would advise that you submit them to Mr Reid and get his instructions, not only as to the length but as to the tone of the review. This may save you a good deal of unnecessary labour.

"Pray don't say ever again that Friday is unlucky, since

you wrote your letter on that day it was a lucky day for me at any rate.

"I am sorry that you did not send me your photograph, but unfortunately I do not need a photograph to remember you. I shall never forget your face, nor your voice, nor a single word that you have said. I envy your friends. Heaven help us all! If I had some one near me to give such encouragement as you can give what could I not accomplish.

"I hope you will write to me occasionally when you have time; in one way and another it will do me a vast amount of good, and I shall be very certain to make answer, and remember that Friday is just as lucky a day as any.

"Do not please be frightened at the length of this letter, for it is not half so long as some I can write, and if you encourage me, probably will write.—Ever your sincere and faithful friend,

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS "

"NEW YORK TRIBUNE,
"October 17th, 1883.

"DEAR MADAM,—If the book to which the enclosed refers were not now so old, we might have been able to make use of the matter. The new volume by the same Author, however, is announced for publication in some two or three weeks. If some of the points in this could be embodied in an article or in a review of the new book, there might be a chance of our using it, at any rate we should be glad to see it. Certainly this does not seem to warrant in the least the depreciating tone you use concerning it and your work in general in your conversation the other day.—Yours respectfully,

J. WHITELAW REID."

And when I answered this letter, came the third letter of Mr Harris to me, which somehow ended our correspondence, but not my tender and faithful affection for him and all that he has ever written.

"12th November 1883.

"DEAR AND GRACIOUS LADY,—I am very sorry my letter gave you pain. I am afraid you think I do not properly appreciate what you said of my work, if so you are labouring under a terrible mistake.

"The reading of the MSS. did me a great deal of good, for I know there is no higher form of success from an artistic standpoint than to win the sincere praise of an enthusiastic and cultivated woman. But everything I said was disconnected from my own appreciation, and the opinion I gave you was that of an Editor. I was trying to give you a cue which would make your notice of the book available for the "Tribune." I hope Osgood sent you the book instead of the advance sheets, for it was already out.

"And so you know Morgan, and you ask if I know him. Gracious Heavens! I know every thump and wriggle of his little mind. Did you ever sleep near enough to a kitchen to wake up in the night and hear a mouse trying to climb out of a dishpan, and do you remember how it affected you? That is the mysterious feeling I have about Morgan. He is the only creature I ever saw whose flatness and dullness gave him character. There is nothing more original than his stupidity. I had been writing some off-hand impressions of Boston, and what does Morgan do but get the proof sheets and sell the matter to the Philadelphia press on his own account. I had to write and stop the publication, and then I had to interest myself to prevent the 'Constitution' from discharging Morgan. You will acknowledge that this ought to be called an Ordeal. But Morgan told you true. He is a writer on the 'Constitution.' He goes out and hunts up advertisements and writes them out. He has quite a knack of this business and for this reason I was not willing that the paper should sacrifice its own interests on my behalf, particularly when I knew that Morgan was innocent of any intention to wrong me by selling my matter and pocketing the proceeds. And so you know Morgan! Well, well, when circumstance

borrow the humour of fate we may know that the world is smaller than we have dreamed of.

"I promised Mr Alden a sketch entitled 'Blue Dave' for the Christmas number, but the Osgood's kept pressing me so for Remus copy that I could not finish it in time. I doubt if it would have passed muster. Mr Alden is a fine man. He has breadth and generosity.

"I don't know the Harpers, but I suppose they are very keen. Take any large successful firm that has been compelled to adapt itself to the emergencies of four or five generations, and you will find a great deal of hardness and cant tucked away under its idea of business. I have a horror of that word and of the idea. But really I did not start out to put myself in one of Morgan's recitation attitudes. Pardon me. The limit to human endurance must be at the bottom of this sheet, where I sign myself,—
Sincerely and gratefully yours,

“JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

"Although I do not need, as I said, a Photograph to remember your face, I still would be very grateful if you would send me one."

Mr Harris was mistaken in his opinion of the Harpers, there was never a more generous publishing firm than theirs. Perhaps this accounts for their failure, and the business of the old firm passing into new hands.

THE NUN OF THE VANDERBILT BALL



THE NUN OF THE VANDERBILT BALL

TO THE
HONORABLE
MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

CHAPTER XXIV

BRER RABBIT AS THE THERMOMETER OF MY AFFECTIONS

I HAVE a friend who says that my affection for people is always determined by the circumstance whether I have read them "Uncle Remus" or not. He often asks, "Has she read you 'Uncle Remus?'" and if the answer is "No," he shakes his head and says, "Ah, well, she has not taken you to her heart of hearts." And indeed there is no writer who so penetrates to the roots of my heart as Joel Chandler Harris, and I do not at all agree with him that the negro dialect is an easy thing to do. Above all it is necessary in negro dialect to write from the soul in order to have the sentiment reach the reader. It needs absolute directness, honesty, straightforwardness, a touch of simple homeliness and a beautiful tenderness to make it real. Mr Harris had all these qualities combined with a wonderful sense of both humour and pathos. I have often wondered if Frank Carruthers Gould is a reincarnation of some old Virginian gentleman, so perfectly does he write negro dialect. Where will you find greater observation or more intelligent philosophy, than in this little description of Brer Rabbit when the Wolf brings him the news of the death of Brer Fox :

"I fetch bad news, Brer Rabbit," sez Brer Wolf, sezee.

"Bad news is soon tole," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

By dis time Brer Rabbit done come ter de do' wid his head tied up in a red hankcher. Brer Wolf wuz gettin' nearer Brer Rabbit, but he don't git too near.

"You better holler from whar you stan', Brer Wolf," sez Brer Rabbit, "I'm monstous full of fleas dis mornin'."

"All right," sez Brer Wolf, sezee. "Brer Fox died dis mawnin', sez Brer Wolf, sezee.

"Whar yo' mo'nin' gown, Brer Wolf?" sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

"Gwine atter it now," sez Brer Wolf, sezee. "I des' call by fer ter bring de news. I went down ter Brer Fox house a little bit eer go, en dar I foun' 'im stiff," sezee. Den Brer Wolf lope off.

Den Brer Rabbit jump up 'en out he went. When he got to Brer Fox house, he look in, en der lay Brer Fox stretch out on de bed des ez big ez life. Den Brer Rabbit make like he talkin' to hisself:

"Nobody roun' fer ter look atter Brer Fox—not even Brer Turkey Buzzard ain't come ter de funer'l," sezee. "I hope Brer Fox ain't dead, but I speck he is," sezee. "Even down ter Brer Wolf done gone en lef' 'im. Hit's de busy season wid me, but I'll set up wid 'im. He seem like he dead, yet he mayn't be," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. "When a man go ter see dead folks, dead folkes allers raises up der behime leg en hollers, *wahoo!*" sezee.

Brer Fox he lay still. Den Brer Rabbit he talk little louder:

"Mighty funny! Brer Fox look like he dead, yit he don't do like he dead. Dead folks hists der behime leg en hollers, *wahoo!* When a man come ter see um," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

Sno nuff, Brer Fox lif' up his foot en holler *wahoo!* En Brer Rabbit he tear out de house like de dogs wuz atter 'im. Brer Wolf mighty smart, but nex' time you hear fum 'im honey, he'll be in trouble. You des hole yo' breff 'n wait."

Brer Rabbit knew that if Brer Turkey Buzzard was not around Brer Fox was alive. He only went in the house to betray him and to show his cunning.

And one of the most beautiful stories in the whole world, and certainly the most beautiful story that has ever been written of the old South is "Marse Chan," by Thomas Nelson Page, which is in negro dialect: it has the tender grace of a lay that is dead, in every line.

The day after its publication he could with truth repeat the words of Lord Byron, "I awoke and found myself famous." For it embodies all the traits of which we of the South are so proud: the chivalrous honour, the tenderness, the splendid courage, the endurance, the noble pride, and the loyalty of the Southern character are touchingly portrayed, and it has made a whole world of lovers for Mr Page.

THE
OF



"YOU BETTER HOLLER FROM WHAR' YOU STAN', BRER WOLF," SEY BRER
RABBIT, "I'M MONST'OUS FULL OF FLEAS DIS MORNIN'!"

70 1941
1941-1942

Years after its publication the author wrote me this modest letter :

“ RICHMOND, *July 22nd*, 1888.

“ MY DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I have only to thank you for an added kindness. The ‘Star’ arrived containing your most flattering notice of myself and ‘Marse Chan.’ I scarcely can claim now to be its author, for I feel that the old life of the South was the author of its being, and I was simply the amanuensis who, being so fortunate as to catch its echo, transcribed it.

“ I assure you my debt to the ‘Star’ as well as to its delightful editor is very great, and I beg that you will convey to him my acknowledgments.

“ When my new story, ‘Two Little Confederates,’ now running in ‘St Nicholas,’ appears in book form, which will be about October, I shall send it to you, for although your boy will probably be too old to appreciate it, I know that his mother will not be, and it contains a fair account, making allowances for romantic licence, of the house where I was born. And our old Bella, and mother, and the boys, are real, and are, thank God ! still spared to me.

“ The notice of the reception was read and greatly enjoyed by both Anne and myself. We recognized our friend Miss Kenny among the ladies who assisted the hostess, or was it her sister ?

“ Major Reilly, our Judge at Cairo, made very pleasant mention of Mr O’Connor to me the other day, but our conversation was too formal for me to learn all I wished. It is rather a joke, I suspect, for Reilly came home to testify in a suit I was prosecuting against him and his brother, and one George Campbell, formerly one of Mr O’Connor’s Liverpool constituents, for fraud, and my only communication with him was in the court room. We used to be very good friends, and I did not charge Judge Reilly with fraud. It is proper to say that the jury exonerated John D. Reilly also, but found Campbell guilty.

“ Mrs Page is, I am sorry to say, ill, but sends many more

affectionate messages than I can venture to give on crossed paper.—With our affectionate remembrances to both you and Mr O'Connor, yours always sincerely,

“THOMAS NELSON PAGE”

The late Henry Ward Beecher hated slavery. He passed from State to State, and with his mighty plea for the abolition of slavery, and by his fiery eloquence he precipitated the Civil War that cost America one million lives and freed the slaves. But this did not prevent his admiration of the Southern character. I did not like his politics, but I knew and loved Mr Beecher, and when I read “Marse Chan” to him for the first time, he was most deeply touched and the tears ran down his cheeks.

Years afterwards when he came to England I had this note from him :

“HAMPSTEAD, *July 15th.*

“MY DEAR GIRL,—When you come to Hampstead prepare yourself for a little reading of our dear ‘Marse Chan.’ You need not bring it with you as I have the volume at hand. I could have read it again myself, but have not done so, preferring through the absent years to wait until we met again.

“Thanks for your Stores ticket. I went there yesterday and bought a little fruit, for which I paid ten dollars ! It would not do for me to live in England, I should become a bankrupt.—Your sincere friend,

“HENRY WARD BEECHER”

I read him “Marse Chan.” “It is the last time I shall ever hear it,” he said. And it was, as Mr Beecher died the following winter.

Dr Parker, at whose house Mr Beecher was visiting, objected. “Beecher,” he said, “you are not going to listen to a whole story this hot afternoon ?”

“Parker,” Mr Beecher said, “I am ! This is my tea-party, and I am going to sit on the floor with my head on Mother’s

knee " (" Mother " was his wife), " and I am going to have a good cry. If you don't want to listen, go out in the garden."

Dr Parker stationed himself by the door, ready to flee into the garden, but he never stirred until the story was finished, and even then he was unable to speak his thanks for a few moments, while his beautiful wife, in tears, was as deeply moved as Mr Beecher himself—that wonderful man, who was by far the greatest orator I have ever heard: gifted with superb eloquence, great variety and picturesqueness of language, a deep chest, a fine throat, and a beautiful voice perfectly trained, he was an ideal preacher. The final test of both acting and oratory is the power of the speaker to get a stupendous effect in a few words. I heard Mr Beecher in one of his sermons end a peroration with " You can not destroy God. And you can not destroy the souls that echo to God." His voice gathered force and volume as he went on, and the last word was like a silver trumpet calling upon the congregation to maintain their faith. He had the quality of being always interesting, was full of humour, daringly original, and quite a century in advance of his time. The day of this sermon I waited with Marshall Wilder to speak to him, and Mr Beecher said: " Wait a minute, I want to put on a ring," and taking out of his pocket a wonderful opal he placed it on his stubby finger and turned it to catch the light, with the delight of a child. He had a perfect mania for gems: their clear and pellucid colour and brilliancy were a continual pleasure to him, and he told me he had forty rings. He wore them only fitfully, but carried one or two in his pocket and occasionally refreshed his sight by looking at them.

Quite a different preacher from Mr Beecher was Father Ducey, who was for many years one of my staunchest friends, and whose death has made a gap in my life never to be filled. He, too, was a very brilliant orator, at times strikingly dramatic, and as intimate and dictatorial with his fashionable New York congregation as any old Irish parish priest laying down the law to his following of humble peasants.

He endured the huge hats as they are worn now as long as

he could, and then he admonished the startled ladies under his gaze to get another headgear for St Leo's, as the church was not built for the present mode, and he must have more than two women sitting in a pew.

When he was preaching a sermon once, on marriage, he said : " Marriage between a young man and a young woman is made by God ; between an old man and a young woman is made by man ; but between an old woman and a young man it is made by the devil." His tongue was caustic, but his heart was kind, and his nature was one of the most generous, giving constantly in charity, and he was instantly touched and moved by every tale of woe. His influence over young men was very great, and his interest in them was truly understanding and paternal. One of his friends was a handsome, reckless young blackguard, who had committed nearly every crime in the calender, and finally got such a terrible reputation that Father Ducey told him not to visit him in the day when he could be seen. But he received him at night, and never failed to pray for him and to hope for a regeneration of spirit. He was the most popular priest in New York, and at any public meeting the mention of his name was the signal for a great burst of applause. It is easy to be popular with the comfortable and rich, but the poor find out a man's inmost heart, for they demand both patience and help. Father Ducey, through his constant generosity, made himself one of them. And blessed are the poor, for theirs shall be the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER XXV

THE DOMESTIC PROBLEM SOLVED. BRIGIT, THE JEWEL OF THE WORLD

WHEN I neglected reading my MSS. for the Harpers, as I sometimes did, a vast collection used to accumulate, and I then farmed them out to my various good-natured friends. Father Ducey has read many a one for me, and Dr Walter Gillette, my kind and good friend as well as physician, nearly always had a number on hand.

I have often wondered if my work suffered during the last summer that I spent in New York, but at Franklin Square they never complained—probably they never knew of my illness.

It was a blazing hot summer, Mary Agnew had gone to live in the country, and I had taken a small flat and settled myself in it with Brigit, who was one of the most remarkable women I have ever known and a priceless gem to me. She had lived with me off and on for a number of years, and with her various accomplishments commanded high wages, and I really did not expect any such good fortune as her coming to me for what I could afford to pay her, but she did come, and in spite of real poverty I lived like a lady. Brigit was an accomplished cook, she could do anything, bone turkey, make all sorts of salads, cook vegetables like a Frenchwoman, boil rice like an Indian, and make the lightest cakes and the most wonderful sweets I ever ate. She was also a first-class laundress, and in those days all my clothes were white. White dressing-gowns in the morning, and white muslin in the afternoon, and Brigit

did all the washing for the house and for me. On Monday morning she was up at 5 o'clock (each flat had a little laundry assigned to it at the top of the house) and by 9 o'clock she had all her clothes hung up to dry and my breakfast ready. She kept the flat spotlessly clean and managed the entire work, washing, ironing, cooking and waiting on me, and when Toodie came home from school for his vacation she looked after him as well, and yet she had time to read "The New York Sun" and to discuss politics with me. And I have never seen so thrifty a servant. She never threw away even one crumb of stale bread, but dried it, pounded it into powder, and put it aside for breakfast cakes, and those cakes with fresh radishes and a cup of marvellous coffee were all that she allowed me for breakfast. I was never afraid to have the smartest people come to see me, because everything was exquisitely done and in such order, and Brigit always spotless in a nice gingham dress and long white apron was quite ready to answer the door. If I went out at night to a theatre or a party, she always waited up for me until I came in, and saw that I was in bed before she left me. She had many offers, of course, to get higher wages, and my kind friends often tried to entice her away, but her answer was "that I had my ways and she had her ways, and they happened to agree, and she thought she had better stay." How fond my friends were of Brigit and that little flat! I entertained constantly, giving both lunches and dinners, and was not too proud to have my friends provide them if they liked. I remember an old friend from Maryland used to come very often to dinner and he would say, "Don't be alarmed, my dinner is on the stairs, and Brigit has undertaken to cook it." And I was often sent Virginian hams, chickens and turkeys from the South, a barrel of flour, now and then, from Georgia, so my table cost me very little, and I think this part of my life was almost entirely happy, until I was struck down by the first attack of my now vigilant and recurrent enemy, peritonitis. I went out one hot afternoon, not feeling very well, and the weather

suddenly changed, a cold rain came up, and I had no umbrella and got soaked through to the skin. I could not afford a cab, and came home on a crowded street car, having to stand outside, and the draught blowing on my soaked clothes gave me a terrible chill. That night I had a high temperature, and when at last I sent for my doctor he pronounced it peritonitis, and for two months I was in bed and Brigit's labours were much increased, as I could not afford to have a trained nurse, and she had to do all the work of the flat as well as to nurse me. My doctor often came at 9 o'clock at night and stayed with me until 12 o'clock so that she might have a little sleep for the first part of the night, and during these two months I never heard her complain of fatigue, nor was she ever impatient. And every evening my funny shabby old carpet bag, with various labels on it, arrived from Franklin Square full of MSS., and the next morning the boy called on his way down to the office to take back what I had read. My Doctor said that if I did not stop work and give myself a chance of rest I would certainly die, but if I lost my salary from Franklin Square I would starve, so I had to go on. I have never minded work, but this was unrelenting bitter poverty, to be obliged to read and think and write with a temperature varying from 103 to 104, and my exhausted body racked with the most terrible pain that a woman can endure, and my brain, dulled by opium, working fitfully and with difficulty. Finally, the worst fears of Dr Gilette were realized, an abscess formed which seriously threatened my life, and did eventually give me a slight attack of blood poisoning, but I made a most valiant effort to live, as my death would have left my little son unprovided for and alone. And I told the doctor that I simply could not and would not die, although I calmly made preparations to do so, sorting and burning my letters, and making my will, which was, after all, only to ask an old friend to care for my little boy and to have me buried in the South under a magnolia tree. I felt that I wanted to be far away from the rush, the noise, and the loneliness of New York.

The crisis passed and I got better, and finally Dr Gillette told me the time had come for me to be able to bear the pain with reduced doses of morphine, and from that moment, although he said it was much too sudden, I refused to take it again. I was wrong, the sudden cessation of the opiate was a terrible wrench to my nerves, and I had not a moment's sleep for forty-eight hours ; but I have always had a strong will, and plenty of self-control. If it is necessary for me to do a thing I can do it, no matter what the suffering may be. I remember one night when the pain was uncontrollable and my poor numb legs had been in the same position for weeks, I asked Brigit to tell me something interesting enough to make me forget it. "Think," I said, "of the thing in your life which you remember most clearly and tell me that," and Brigit said : "I'll tell you the story of my nun."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE TRAGEDY OF A NUN

“**A** GOOD many years ago I was a servant at a convent in New Jersey for the cure of consumption. Among the patients was a young married man about thirty, very handsome, with black eyes and hair. He looked like a Spaniard, and he may have been one. At first he was very ill, but after a while he got better, and he was there for a long time. The sister who nursed him was most experienced, and he obeyed her like a child, and always wanted her with him. She had lived all her life in convents, being left an orphan at nine; the sisters had educated her, and at sixteen she became a Sister of Charity, and ever since had nursed the sick in the hospital for consumption. She was thirty-two, but looked only twenty, and her face was lovely—a real Madonna face, with sweet blue eyes and long eyelashes, and her smile was quite beautiful. All the patients loved her, and everybody wanted to be nursed by Sister Teresa.

“I noticed that she was getting thin, and she seemed very restless and greatly troubled, and at last one night I asked her what was the matter, and she began to cry pitifully, desperately—I never saw such sobs—and said, ‘Brigit, can I trust you? There is no other creature in all the world to help me.’ And I said she could, and then she gasped out, ‘The greatest trouble that can befall a woman is mine—I am ruined, soul and body—God will never forgive me. There is the man I love—I do love him, but I hate myself.’ She pointed to the garden where he was sitting. It was in May, and

the Spanish-looking man was nearly well then, and as happy and gay as possible. She went on, "I must get away from here as quickly as I can. Take this money and buy me a dress and a hat and shoes, and I'll go to-night." That afternoon I went out and bought a very plain black alpaca dress, as that was more like a nun's habit than anything, and a black hat with a pink rose, but she wouldn't wear the rose, and ripped it off with her poor, trembling, awkward fingers, and gave it to me. I did enjoy seeing her pretty little feet in high-heeled shoes. I got them with buckles, but she never noticed them, she was crying so. Every part of her habit she laid her head upon and kissed—her crucifix, her belt, her beads, and her cap, with its white wings like a bird, she held to her breast as if it had been a child, the cap she had worn so long and so honourably. 'Oh, Brigit,' she said, 'how could I have forgotten my vows, and after sixteen years! Oh, merciful God, help me—and he has a wife! That's the worst of all!' She was white with despair, but she looked so sweet with her short hair curling all over her head just like a young girl.

"At eight o'clock we stole away and went to an apartment he had taken for us in New York. I did all the work and I never saw any gentleman in the world love a lady as much as he did her. He never went out or came in without kissing her hand, and I often saw him kiss her shoe, and he always brought her some little thing—a rose, or a bunch of violets, or a little box of sweets, or a book, or a picture paper, or some trifle to show her that he was thinking of her. He said his wife drank, and he could divorce her, and he would marry Sister Teresa the moment he could. But he saw as well as I did that she was fretting herself to death—her conscience never gave her a moment's rest. Finally, she must have spoken to him about leaving him, for he called me aside one morning and said, 'Brigit, don't, for God's sake, help Teresa get away! I love her, and I know I can make her happy in time, and I can't live without her—and let me tell you this: if you help her to get away, the first time I see you afterward I'll shoot you like a dog.' He was

so fierce he frightened me terribly. That same week Sister Teresa wrote to the Mother-house in Cincinnati, and the Reverend Mother wrote to her to meet her in New York at another convent, a little boys' school, and one day we stole away. She left the man a letter that must have broken his heart. She said in it that she loved his body, but she loved his soul more, and she was going away to save it—and hers—and that her every breath would mean a prayer for him, and their child—and she prayed him to be patient and to forgive her. I got her a little crucifix to put in the letter, and how she kissed it and clung to it! He was to forgive her—wasn't that like a woman! It was four months since we came to New York, and this was the first time we had left the apartment. She was like a poor helpless child in the world, and afraid of the streets. We arrived at the convent about six o'clock in the evening. The Reverend Mother from Cincinnati, and the Mother of the convent were both waiting. When the poor thing got out of the train she dropped first on her knees and then she laid her face on the Reverend Mother's shoes, and the Mother stooped and raised her up in her arms, and we four women cried fit to break our hearts.

"It was decided the next day that the two Mothers should between them adopt the baby when it came, and educate it, and care for it, and Sister Teresa was to enter the order of the Magdalen Nuns."

"And did you," I asked, "never hear of her again, Brigit?"

"Wait," Brigit answered, "I went to Brooklyn to live, and for a while I was terribly afraid of meeting the man, but I never did."

"I hope," I said, "the baby died, and she was spared her second great heartbreak of parting with it. She didn't count on that little cry, and the flood of love that comes with it, to wedded and unwedded mothers alike."

"Yes," said Brigit, "she died when the baby was born, and the baby died too."

"What became of the father?" I asked.

"The Reverend Mother," Brigit said, "managed in some

way to get the news to him of Sister Teresa's death, and he became a Catholic and was never out of church, but only lived two months afterwards. He must have been glad to die, for I never saw a gentleman love a lady so much."

The dawn had come ; and with daylight all pain, physical and mental, is easier to bear—so I sent Brigit for a little rest, and then I slept myself.

CHAPTER XXVII

I BECOME ENGAGED

MY Mary had been married and had gone to Ireland to live, and when I was well enough to travel, she insisted upon my taking a vacation and coming to Ballymena and making her a visit, and I went over and arrived at Belfast in September (how beautiful Ireland was, and how I loved it!), and remained abroad until February.

The weather was bitterly cold that winter, but the absolute quiet of the life in the country, the very early hours, and the quiet soft air, and her beloved companionship, did everything for me, and before I left Ballymena I was feeling strong and well once more, and full of hope.

I came to London from Ireland, to join two friends of mine from Richmond, Mrs Day and Elizabeth her daughter. How pretty Elizabeth was! She was just twenty-three, with slate-grey eyes, and hair to match—I never saw hair which had grown grey so evenly as hers, and it fell in heavy masses down to her knees like a dove-coloured veil.

Mrs Day had been recommended to go to No. 9 George Street, Hanover Square—it was a pension kept by Miss Moore, an Irish-woman of excellent family, who had herself lived a great many years in Virginia; her brother had been a General in the Confederate Army.

The pension had, like herself, plenty of character; the table was excellent and bountiful, and the food was of the very best quality. She got up early in the morning and went to Mass, and to market afterwards. As to furniture, there was nothing in the house that matched anything else, as

everything had been bought at sales, and at second-hand shops. There was nothing vulgar in the house, and there were some bits of splendour, and it had, in spite of the dirt of a good many London fogs, an air of gentility, and Miss Moore herself possessed the kindest and most hospitable heart in the world. Everybody who came under her roof had an instantaneous claim upon her consideration.

The first day that I arrived in London Colonel Mitchell, the American Vice-Consul, came to call upon me, and as I was going to be in London only a very few days, he proposed returning after dinner and taking me to the House of Commons to be introduced to Justin M'Carthy, whom he knew. Great was our vexation to find that Mr Justin M'Carthy had gone for the evening. I had myself a letter of introduction to him, and I left it to be delivered the next day. The big, good-natured policeman, seeing how terribly disappointed I was at not seeing the House of Commons, proposed that he should take Colonel Mitchell's card to Mr T. P. O'Connor, who, he said, was always most polite to Americans. In a few moments the genial T. P. came out beaming. He was delighted to do the honours for Mr M'Carthy, explained all the House of Commons most lucidly, then disposed of Colonel Mitchell and took me up to the Ladies' Gallery, where his native eloquence poured forth like a torrent, and he seemed prepared to keep me any length of time—certainly, verifying the judgment of the policeman who said he was so kind to Americans.

When we came downstairs Colonel Mitchell was looking quite gloomy after our prolonged absence, nor did the proposition of T. P. to stroll home with us seem to make him any more cheerful. It was only at the door of my pension that T. P.'s eloquence ceased, and both he and Colonel Mitchell had arranged to call upon me the next day—but not together, and this was my first meeting with T. P.

The next day Justin M'Carthy called and invited me to dine at the House of Commons. The party consisted of his daughter, T. P., Justin Huntly M'Carthy, and myself. I thought I had never heard such brilliant, gay, witty con-

versation — they flashed together like meteors. Justin Huntly and T. P. were like two accomplished fencers. As I was fresh from America where, even if men can talk, they rarely do if women are present, allowing them to absorb all the conversation and all the attention, the dinner was a perfect revelation to me.

Colonel Mitchell and T. P. came to see me every day, and sometimes twice a day. They had an opportunity of becoming better acquainted, but they were never congenial, and when I finally announced my engagement to T. P., Colonel Mitchell was distinctly pessimistic about the future, giving me an exceedingly long list of unhappy international marriages. This was, however, a matter of six weeks later, after I had been to Paris and again to Ireland. I remained ten days in London before starting for America. The time was entirely taken up by arguments between T. P. and myself as to whether I should be married then or at all, or the following summer when I was coming to Europe again. Mrs Agnew had said, "If you are going to marry Elizabeth, do it now, as she might change her mind." This enhanced my value in the eyes of T. P., who loves uncertainty and change, and it gave him an opportunity of using his persuasive powers, which are very great and of which he has every reason to be proud. I felt like yielding more than once, but resisted. He could not leave Parliament and his work and accompany me to America, and it seemed so foolish to be married one day and return to America the next, and I had never been separated from my little son longer than a week, until then, and was aching to see him again—so I stood firm.

One evening T. P. appeared, and was transcendently charming and agreeable. Presently he took from his pocket an important looking official document, which proved to be a special licence for our marriage the next day! Oh, how magnificently he talked and argued, and how I laughed! A special licence, without one word of consultation with me! We were to be married in St Margaret's Church, Westminster—it was not to be announced—and later, on my return from America, we were to be married again in the

Catholic Church. His chief argument for the marriage was that he was engaged on a novel, "Dead Man's Island" (afterwards published in an Irish paper and never a great success, but some very brilliant writing in it nevertheless), and that he must have no uncertainties in his life while he was doing it. I had read the beginning of the romance—found it too sombre in hue for success, and did not feel that even his getting married would add gaiety to the book, so I said, no, we must wait until my return from America. He folded up the special licence hopefully, and put it in his pocket, and said if I was not to wear a wedding ring at least I must have an engagement ring, and would I meet him at the Army and Navy Stores the next day—which I did, and chose a modest little turquoise ring which cost, I remember, eight pounds, and it pleased me as much as if the price had been eighty. I knew T. P.'s income was small, and did not allow him to carry out his wish and buy diamonds which I was sure he could not afford.

When we left the Stores he placed my hand in his arm and grasped it tightly with the other hand. "Now," he said, "you must come to church with me for a moment."

I objected, and laughed so contagiously, the people we passed laughed in sympathy. We arrived in a few moments at St Margaret's, and interviewed a very ancient sexton. T. P. said, "I am coming here on Friday at 11 o'clock to be married—have the clergyman and witnesses ready."

The old man answered indifferently, "All right."

Then I said, "I'm afraid the gentleman won't come on Friday as the lady he is to marry is very ill."

The old man paid no attention to me, but turned his weak old eyes on T. P. and asked, "Are you, or are you not, going to get married?"

"I am," T. P. answered firmly.

I was almost suffocated with laughing, but managed to say, disconnectedly, "If the lady is worse you can't marry here—you will have to be married at her bedside."

"We will be here Friday," T. P. confidently replied.

The old man meantime had been examining T. P. carefully,

and he asked querulously, "Ain't you the gentleman as was going to be married this morning and didn't come?"

"I am," said T. P., unabashed.

"Then why didn't you?" the old man grumbled.

In the middle of uncontrollable laughing I gasped out, "The lady was so ill."

"Never mind," said T. P., "Friday"—and we went away.

I forget what I did on that particular day, but it was not the business of getting married. I think I went with Colonel Mitchell to buy a steamer trunk, and by way of making myself agreeable I said to him, "What a fine figure you have! How tall are you?" And he answered, "Six feet two, but I don't look so tall, as my figure is perfectly proportioned—have you noticed it?"

Men are really appealing in their vanity—it is so simple, childlike, and unafraid. Ah well! This "perfectly proportioned" being was a gallant, kind, unselfish, honourable, high-minded gentleman, and it was only his innocent vanity that was out of proportion.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A SHIPWRECK—LEAVING MY FRIENDS

A crisis reveals man's true nature, and often dissipates the myth of his chivalry to woman.

I LEFT T. P. to deal with clergyman, witnesses and sexton, and on Saturday I sailed for America. This was in January, and the following June I found it very difficult to leave my friends and to return to England again.

One of the compensations of poverty is disinterested friendship. When you have neither money, nor hospitality, nor time, nor service of any kind to offer your friends, and they love you, and all the favours and advantages are on their side, you are sure of pure, unalloyed affection. This was my position. I had been very poor, and very busy, and badly dressed, and often tired, and sometimes sad, but I had my little circle of intimate, devoted friends, of whose life I formed a part, as even in busy New York I saw them almost every day.

Dr Walter Gillette had literally snatched me from the jaws of death only the summer before, and there was Mrs Clark who had been a mother to me—a woman whose heart was pure gold—and her son, Max, who stood almost as near to me as my own child. When Max was a baby his mother sailed from New York to California, and the boat struck a rock in the Pacific Ocean some hundreds of miles from San Francisco, and the whole crew were landed on a tiny island covered with ashes—not a drop of water or a blade of grass. Luckily the boat did not go to pieces at once. They got the evaporating machine for making fresh water from salt—a sorry business at best, as the water remains brackish, and

never water enough to quench thirst. Even on this desert island with death staring them in the face, some ladies elected to be exclusive, and declined lying near the *filles de joie*—for the people were packed together like sardines at night. My friend with Max, who was then a baby, surrounded herself with these ladies, and she said they behaved like heroines, particularly one, who gave her share of water to the children until her tongue was swollen, blackened and cracked from want of it. Mrs Clark was possessed of a courage worthy of Napoleon. She was full of hope all through the terrible ten days or fortnight which they spent on the island—and at dawn one morning, far, far away, she saw a thin haze of blue smoke. At first she thought it was her imagination, but the smoke grew bluer, and then a ship came in sight, and finally it saw their signals of distress. She then awoke the Captain, told the good news, and they were eventually rescued. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company afterwards gave her a set of silver in appreciation of her courage.

Only in a crisis is the true nature of a man or woman revealed. Mrs Clark told me of one man, so gallant and flirtatious to the women on board, who when the one to whom he had shown the most compromising attentions rushed to him after the ship struck the rock, screaming, "Save me, save me!" pushed her from him roughly, saying, "Go away, woman," and swiftly leaped into the first life-boat lowered, only to be ordered out by the Doctor, who stood with pistol in hand calling out, "The women and children first! The next man who gets in the boat I'll shoot like a dog!" And he did shoot one sailor, and that restored order.

Her great courage and her great heart made me cling to my friend, and there never was a boy so lovable, so honest and honourable, and truthful, and studious, and kind as Max, and he occupied the place of an elder brother to Toodie. It was really heart-breaking to leave these and other friends. I remember going one night to a restaurant for oysters with General Kirkland, one of my truest and most understanding comrades, and H. S. N., whose tender friendship for me dated

from the days when we were both pink-cheeked youngsters. When we sat down to supper General Kirkland looked at me regretfully and said, "It's a pity the little woman is engaged to an Irishman. We are going to lose her. Do you want to marry her, N.?"

H. S. N. flushed up, but stood to his guns like a man and said, "Yes, General, I do."

"Then why don't you do it?" said General Kirkland. "You know I love her better than any woman in the world, but I dreamed last night I was married to her, and I tell you, sir, I woke up the whole of Fifth avenue with my screams." He continued, "Does T. P. consider you a type?"

I said, "Oh, I don't know—I suppose so."

"Well," he said, "will you give him a message from me? Will you tell him that you are the only thing of the kind in the country!"

I can always enjoy any amount of humour at my own expense, even when there is a strong suspicion of truth attached to it, and administered in generous doses, if it be without malice. There is nothing that creates such quick intimacy or such thorough understanding as appreciation of the same joke, and my friends are welcome to laugh at my peculiarities and eccentricities any day if they will only love me.

"The world is filled with folly and sin, and love must cling where it may,

For Beauty is easy enough to win, but one isn't loved every day."

People with a sense of humour are hungrier for affection than those without it. For at heart they are often both lonely and sad. Life seen through comic spectacles is an amusing, but not an edifying sight. Tears can quiver just behind laughter. You do not want to murder if you are a comedian, but you can long to die. My friend, William Kirkland, was a born humorist, but life had gone very awry with him. He is at rest now, buried in Virginia. I am glad he sleeps in the South, where the mocking-bird sings and the honeysuckle blooms. Only necessity brought him to New York, and he

never liked the noise and the cold, and was always home-sick. Friendship without one *souppçon* of sentiment between a woman and a man rarely exists in England, but it is very common in America, and I make bold to say, that it is a woman's strongest inducement to virtue. If two or three men genuinely like a woman with frankness, appreciation and trust, she will pause before she betrays the trust. Without analysing the position she feels she is expected to uphold an ideal. She stands for something higher and better in womanhood than surrender. Mrs Crawford, the brilliant Paris Correspondent of "Truth," my good and consistent friend, says I have a genius for friendship. If it be true, it is my only genius. But this I do know—I have loved my friends understandingly, and often there has been between us a communion of spirit that passeth all understanding out of which has been born an indestructible bond.

My idea of loyalty in friendship is best illustrated by three street boys in New York. Two were preparing to fight. One turned to the spectator and said, "Jim, before dis yer fight begins is you fur me or agin me?" Jim answered, "Bill, I'm fur you—but you's in de dead wrong." Now, when my friends are "in de dead wrong" that's the time I'm "fur em"—and that's the time I want them to "be fur me." Any stranger can befriend us when we are in "de dead right." At one time, I had occasion to test myself. It was during the period of the Beecher-Tilton trial. I loved Mr Beecher, firmly believed him innocent of all wrong, took my stand on that, and I never read one word of the testimony. "If," an astute judge asked me, "he is guilty?" "Then," I said, "he is truly noble, for, believing in God and practising that belief all his life, yet he has committed perjury, not to cast people out in the dark of weaker faith than himself." "What sophistry!" the judge said. "But what an obdurate friend!" According to my code not even marriage has greater obligations than friendship.

American men like women as friends, comrades, companions—as human beings quite apart from sex. The American man likes one woman—he loves another woman.

Very frequently his marriage does not interfere with his friendship, which resembles in many respects the friendship between men.

Englishmen (I am not speaking of the exceptions) like women as wives and sweethearts, not much as mothers and sisters, and their friendships, intellectual, personal and political, are with other men. This is the reason doubtless why they have such superficially bad manners with women. In trouble they can be and are kind, helpful, and even chivalrous, but life is not altogether made up of trouble, and I think the forward way some Englishmen use their legs and loll at ease, in House of Commons attitudes, before women is most objectionable. Who would ever think of describing the best mannered Englishman as deferential to women—and yet many foreign and American men are.

The fact is the point of view of an Englishman and an American is exactly opposite. The American man expects to make his wife happy—the Englishman expects his wife to make him happy. If he is happy, he thinks she should be so too in the contemplation of his happiness. There is a story vouched for in an American hotel. An Englishman travelling with his wife ordered two birds to be brought for their supper. The waiter returned saying there was only one bird left. The Englishman then asked, "What is my wife going to have?"

When he falls in love, however, and while he remains in love, an Englishman is probably more generous to the object of his affections than an American, and by all odds more trusting. Two of my friends, for example, without introductions, have married from the Burlington Arcade; one of them, a smart young officer in the Grenadier Guards, had danced and flirted his share, but trustfully accepted the version of her life from a russet-haired lady who casually bid him good day, as he was going to buy silk socks. He married her, and of course subsequently he divorced her. An American man would have been quizzical over her story, and even if in love, he would certainly not have married her. The other man, a sailor, had had even a wider experience with the fair

sex than the Guardsman, and he is both handsome and charming and might have married almost anybody—but a pretty, black eyed little foreigner eating bonbons said as he passed, “Will you have a sweet?” And he said, “Yes,” and married her. He is divorced also. And ridiculous as these marriages are, both these men are possessed of an innate generosity and chivalry, or these women would have been passing episodes. The frank indifference, the good looks and the manliness of the average Englishman are valuable weapons for arousing the interest of an American woman, but there are very few successful international marriages, English or European. An American woman’s best chance of happiness is with one of her own countrymen. In many things their point of view and opinions must be the same, while with different nationalities the situation is pithily summed up by Graham Robertson in “Pinkie and the Fairies,” when Elf Pickle is discoursing his wise philosophy. Elf Pickle: “Point of view, you know. You see me and say, ‘That’s fairy Pickle of course.’ Gregory stares me in the face and says, ‘Of course that isn’t Fairy Pickle, that’s a grasshopper.’” It’s just point of view. And that is where all the unhappiness and misery steps in. How can two people be happy when, looking at the same object, one sees a fairy and the other a grasshopper? For example, an American woman who has been brought up to regard divorce from an enlightened point of view marries and goes to Italy to live, where divorce is non-existent. Her Marquis can leave her temporarily and flaunt the most celebrated cosmopolitan beauty in her face, and she is helpless. Her independent soul, and her younger and more courageous civilization, are defied and set at nought. And even in England the divorce law, as it exists now, is an insult to all womanhood. The man divorces his wife for unfaithfulness; the wife must have combined unfaithfulness and cruelty—and moral cruelty is physical cruelty, because it leads to nervous prostration and illness of divers sorts, to be borne by the woman whose husband is unfaithful—and not only unfaithful, but generally unjust, and unkind, at the same time. Men are more

simple and unsuspecting than women. A clever adventuress can play upon a man as upon a responsive instrument. When the wife is honest and the adventuress dishonest, the wife must inevitably go to the wall and get the worst of it, and yet she has no redress unless her husband strikes her. She is bound hand and foot, not only to him but to her enemy, the third partner in the concern. Much immorality would cease if the divorce law of England was amended and made equal between the sexes. Now, a wife is not nearly so well protected as an ordinary partner in an ordinary business. There, at least, taking in a third partner, without the consent of the other two, would dissolve the firm. But in marriage this rank and hideous injustice is done every day, and the law of an old and intelligent country allows it.

Certainly women in England are right in clamouring for a vote. Many injustices are crying to them for reformation. Lady Aberdeen, that large-minded, noble and admirable woman, who is so deeply concerned over the advancement of her sex, will assuredly have done much good at the Universal Congress for Women held recently in Canada, one of the subjects for discussion being the advisability of a woman keeping her own nationality after marriage. It is a monstrous thing that a woman should lose her country as well as her name on her marriage. These questions had not occupied me so deeply in America, although I became a Suffragist as soon as I began to work for my living. When fifteen pounds a month was paid me, for exactly the same amount of work for which a man received twenty-five this obvious and practical injustice instantly converted me to Woman's Suffrage. A Republican form of government is the best, but even we have many laws for women which need amendment. And the women have already begun to work to amend them.

CHAPTER XXIX

I GET MARRIED

AFTER all, we in America are a young and undisciplined country, but we can take the very worst elements from older civilizations and in a few months turn them into creditable law-abiding citizens, ready to shoulder a musket in defence of their country. Can any other nation do as much? We do it by optimism. We create an atmosphere of self-respect, equality and hope, where the hopeless become self-respecting, and the down-trodden find equality. Give a man back his self-respect, and his reformation has begun.

I gave up a great deal when I gave up my country, for I love it. I love its boisterous youth and its progress and its great possibilities. But I believed in T. P. and in Home Rule, and I had been brought up by my father to love England and the English, and I felt I should be happy in England—and so one lovely May day, with a crowd of friends to see me off, my little son and I stood on the deck of a White Star steamer, and long before the land faded away, my blinding tears had hidden it from my sight. It was a happy voyage; three old friends were on board, the weather was lovely, and T. P. met us at Queenstown. He paid small attention in those days to his appearance, and I remember thinking how quickly I should change the cut of his trousers and the cut of his hair. Toodie (who was then ten years old) and I had many long talks about my getting married. He had a friend in New York whom he preferred as a stepfather. He said, "He has given me rabbits and dogs, and anyhow, if he hadn't, I would

love him, and I do love him. Why don't you marry him ? ”

I said, “ Well, you see he plays cards all night long, and we would be so tired sitting up until the morning waiting for him to come home.”

“ But,” said Toodie, “ if we both try can't we keep him in nights ? ”

I said it would be perfectly impossible, and then the tears rolled down his cheeks and he said regretfully, “ Well, I wish you hadn't let me get so attached to him.”

Then I told him how good T. P. was, how truthful and honourable, what a good example he would be, and that he was very, very kind, and loved children, but I said, “ If you don't like him I wouldn't think of marrying him. You and I are quite alone in the world—I, the only mother, and you the only son—and somebody must give his consent to my getting married, and nothing must ever come between us or separate us, so if you don't like T. P. say so, and back we go to America.”

He was a most deliberate and thoughtful child, and said he would get to know T. P. and think it over. Every day I said, “ Now mind, nothing will induce me to marry T. P. unless you give your consent and unless you like him.”

After thinking it over he said he did, and added, “ He must be a gentleman, because,” he said quite seriously, “ all the O'Connors are the descendants of Kings—[he is a born Imperialist]—and Kings are always the first gentlemen.” After having freely given his consent he refused, however, to go to the wedding. He said, “ I do give my consent, and I'm sure we will be happy with him, but somehow,” and the tears came in his eyes, “ I don't want to *see* you married. Now run along and get married, and come back and tell me so, and I'll wait here in the flat for you.”

I turned obediently to do his bidding and he called me back and pinned a rose on my dress and said, “ I want to love you a minute, God bless you ”—and after a long squeeze T. P. and I and his sister went off to a quiet little church in Horseferry Road, and we were married. Dear

Justin M'Carthy gave me away, a few friends wished us luck, and then we went back to the flat and to Toodie and began housekeeping. T. P. who at the last minute was writing an article with the boy in his study waiting for copy, had forgotten the wedding ring, so there was a slight wait while Mary O'Connor rushed to the Stores to get it, and really we have been rushing to the Stores for forgotten things ever since. Toodie had decorated the flat in our absence, and was very tactful on our return.

And now London was to be my home. The first three months of our married life we lived in T. P.'s small flat in Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street. How businesslike it looks now, but twenty-five years ago it was occupied as residential apartments. There was one large living room, a library for T. P., and four or five bedrooms. Mary O'Connor (now Mrs William O'Malley) T. P.'s youngest sister, formed part of the household. She was a very amiable, attractive girl, with the traditional Irish eyes, bright blue with black eyebrows and lashes, a charming quality of voice, and an ever present touch of persuasiveness in the full-flavoured Irish brogue. She had the proud distinction of having been in prison during the Land League struggles, and she had behaved with great determination and valour—so she was quite a heroine among the Irish. No one ever possessed a sweeter or more unselfish nature than hers, or had a brighter or more hopeful outlook on life. Among the blackest clouds the silver lining always peeped forth for her, and she has made life happier for all who have come into contact with her.

The flat was too small for us, and we moved in September to 38 Grosvenor Road, a house on the river Thames. What a constant interest the river was! It was a pretty little house—my first home in six years—and I loved it, and took root at once. My household gods and books were sent from America—among them some really valuable colonial furniture, and silver that had been made in Virginia, quite simple, but heavy and everlasting (now, alas, gone by the nimble hand of the burglar!).

Feeling was still running high against Home Rule, and

these big cases arriving from New York addressed to Mrs T. P. O'Connor contained, the authorities conjectured, what? Especially as some imaginative woman in Belfast had started the rumour that in America I was the leader of a Fenian band—I who scarcely numbered an Irishman among my acquaintance! So long iron spikes were run cautiously through the boxes to see, I suppose, if they contained dynamite or infernal machines—and the face of “The Madre Isabella Philomena Mehea Iturbede” was seriously injured. This picture was a portrait given to me by a friend who had lived in Mexico and done some service to the then President of the Republic, for which he had been rewarded by a copy of the original portrait of this celebrated nun. She was the founder of an order, and was so talented that she was known as the Tenth Muse—being a poet, a musician, a linguist, a diplomatist and a wonderful business woman. She died leaving the order rich in Convents and leagues of land. The portrait had been presented to me as a conventionalized likeness of myself. It was as I should have been if Nature had been more kind. How I wept when I saw the hole in Donna Isabella’s cheek! But a clever restorer made it as good as new, only there was the bill to pay, and we were dreadfully poor in those days. Every shilling had to be counted. We had only one servant, and I swept and dusted, and made beds, and cleaned silver, and made salads (I am not a cook), and hunted up a small dressmaker who went out to work by the day, and all our dresses were made in the house. (Neither am I a dressmaker!) They were not conspicuous successes, but we wore them, Mary and I, with happy hearts, for we were young and full of hope, and poverty, with the management of a small income, is a very engrossing occupation. The house looked quite pretty when finished, although it was decidedly original and somewhat incongruous. The drawing room curtains in their day cost five hundred dollars, and had draped immense windows in America. In our small house they looked decidedly relics of departed grandeur, but we came very near not having them at all. In the innocence

of my heart and ignorance of London prices I sent them to Pullar's to be cleaned, and they were returned with a bill of five pounds to be collected on delivery! The house and everyone in it was guiltless of five pounds. So the man took them away, and I wrote and formally presented them to Pullar's Dye Works. They refused my present, preferring the five pounds, and then ensued a lively correspondence, in which I blithely persisted in my generosity, and in which Pullar visibly weakened, until at last the curtains reappeared with a quite collapsed bill. When the man brought them he asked the "general" if he could deliver them in person, as he wanted to see the only customer for whom the firm had reduced a bill in his recollection. It was an encouragement for me to go on in well-doing, and I have never forgotten it.

The drawing-room carpet, I remember, was a great problem. I didn't want a Brussels carpet, and I could not afford an Axminster, and my tidy soul revolted at felt, so what was to be done? Luckily, Henry Norman came in to tea (now Sir Henry Norman, and somewhat grave, with his hair thinning on the top). He was such a nice boy then, fresh from an American College, and just settled in rooms at the Temple; he had been furnishing himself, and he was interested in every possible question of life. I never saw such an eager mind. So I confided to him the crux of the carpet and we went upstairs and he looked at the room and said he knew the exact thing, and he gave me the name and the shop and said, "Mind you get a wine colour for the curtains." The colour was to make up for lack of quality, and I did, and this finished off the room. I've forgotten the name of the carpet, but I saw some of it not long ago, and it did not strike me as very pretty. I fear I have outgrown it, but I have not outgrown Sir Henry: that is some consolation. Only I see him too rarely to profit by his great knowledge on an infinite variety of subjects, which when he attacks them in the different magazines are always so delightfully and lucidly dealt with. When the little house was finished, it was fresh and pleasant, and became very dear to me, though the taste of its furnishing was by no means faultless.

CHAPTER XXX

THE UNPOPULARITY OF IRISH POLITICS

WHEN I was first married and came to England, twenty-five years ago, Irish politics were neither popular nor fashionable, and, with the exception of Justin M'Carthy, who had been in constant demand at every great house in London, as a charming and delightful conversationalist and famous literary man, there was scarcely a Nationalist who had entered an English house. Therefore it was a question whether, as the wife of an Irish Member, I would be received by English people or not.

Justin M'Carthy was a very old friend of Lady St Helier (who at that time was Mrs Jeune) and spoke of me in kindly fashion to her, and she left cards and sent an invitation to an "At Home" immediately afterwards. In those days Lady St Helier had perhaps the best known salon in London. She had the courage of her convictions, and asked whom she pleased to her house—and even the great personages, who perhaps in private life would have held themselves apart from some of the gay Bohemians assembled there, were at least pleased and amused to see them.

I was fresh from America at this time, and as we wore *décolletée* gowns only at balls and on ceremonious occasions, I must have looked very modest and provincial and not at all fashionable—but in the enjoyment of the evening I quite forgot my disadvantage. My dress had been fashioned by most loving hands in America—an Irish dressmaker, Mary Johnson, who had taken great pains with it. The material was a heavy ribbed white silk made with a modest square neck. The silk was cut out in points and softened by a little

tulle ruffle—the sleeves were long, plain, very tight, and finished in the same way—the skirt was perfectly plain, cut out in points at the bottom, and a little frill underneath. There was scarcely any train, and it had a narrow sash tied at one side. I wore no jewellery (I had none at the time) and carried no flowers, so I must have presented a very simple effect in the midst of lovely dresses trimmed with lace and many magnificent jewels ; but to be under-dressed is a thing that has never troubled me. It has occurred to me so often in my life that I suppose I have grown accustomed to it. At any rate the evening was a delightful one, and Justin M'Carthy and his daughter Charlotte were very kind in introducing me to various well-known people.

Miss M'Carthy was a very pretty girl, and I remember her dress quite well, as it was rather an original one for a blonde to have chosen. She had very white skin and amber-coloured wavy hair. With this she wore white satin covered with white lace and looped up here and there with amber velvet bows. I thought I had never seen a prettier being.

One of the people to whom she introduced me was, I remember, Oscar Wilde, and he began at once the most brilliant talk about America and American women. He said he had seen many very pretty dainty complete and charming women in America, but never one of magnificent Goddess of Liberty proportions, and he thought that, new as the country was, we should dethrone the Goddess of Liberty and have a French Marquise in her place, as being more representative of the country.

I was then quite new to the carelessness of English etiquette, and I insisted on Mr Wilde's taking me to have a few words of conversation with my host, as in America we were particular to pay special attention to our host and hostess. Mr Wilde assured me laughingly that Mr Jeune did not know I was there, and I replied, " Quite true ; I don't suppose he knows that I am here, but I know that he is there." Whereupon Mr Wilde said my vernacular proclaimed me Irish. I told him, however, that I had no Irish blood, but was of French extraction, and he said that was the next best thing.

He then presented me to Mr Jeune, who looked rather bored and somewhat sleepy, but very, very kind—and when I told him I was the daughter of an American Judge he asked my father's name. I said, "Paschal," and he knew of "Paschal's Annotated Constitution of the United States." I afterwards brought him a copy from America and received such an appreciative letter of thanks.

The evening was most agreeable and friendly, and I took an enormous fancy to Mrs Jeune—but in all that large crowd the person who aroused genuine tenderness in my heart and a desire to know him better was Mr Jeune, because he had spoken of my father. It gave me a feeling of real happiness to find that in England his dear name was not unknown.

Soon after Mrs Jeune's party Charlotte M'Carthy brought Mrs Labouchere to see me. A little boudoir which I had tried to furnish in the Japanese style was just finished, and they were shown in there. The one servant brought in tea, which Charlotte poured out and we began to talk, and in spite of her severe scrutiny I felt that Mrs Labouchere and I should be friends: as the fortune tellers say, "she would cross my path." Her eyes of grey-blue were quite steady in their gaze, and she seemed to be looking through and beyond me. Her manner was very quiet and reserved, but she asked us to spend the following Sunday at Twickenham. This delighted me. I had never been on the river, and Pope's Villa with its carved hall and its grotto in which Pope wrote his "Universal Prayer" was historic, that prayer that has contained some crumb of comfort for every distressed soul—these two verses alone would make him immortal:—

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see ;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so
Since quickened by thy breath ;
Oh, lead me whereso'er I go,
Through this day's life or death.

In those days Mrs Labouchere was a noted hostess, getting just the right people together, very gay, bright and witty, and full of humour herself, and Mr Labouchere was always sparkling and scintillating, so whoever was asked to her house went quite sure of being amused and having, in Americanese, "a good time." The guests arrived at Twickenham about twelve or one o'clock, sat on the lawn until lunch was served, returned to the lawn for coffee, went through the grotto to the other side of the garden for tea, roamed around, smoked, told stories—Mr Labouchere always with a laughing circle around him—and before dinner we went into the house to brush up, morning dress being always the rule, for the convenience of the guests. Then dinner, and later a drive by moonlight or starlight to London. How many, many happy, interested, amused hours I owe to Pope's Villa! Last year when I was staying at York House, the Ratan Tata's historic place, I walked over to the now empty house—it seemed to echo with absent voices, and I wandered sadly over the charming garden, so full of memories. "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Tempest" were both given there with great beauty and success—but that was long after my first day on the river.

There was a most interesting party of people for our first dinner. Mr and Mrs Maxwell (Miss Braddon), the authoress of "Lady Audley's Secret," which I thought and still think the best novel of the kind ever written. Mrs Maxwell was a tall, dignified woman, dressed in black and white, her face wore a very kind expression, and she was as modest and as feminine as a woman who had done nothing. I remember we spoke of Mrs Labouchere, and she said she was a woman of imagination and an excellent critic. There were some straw chairs on the balcony that I admired very much, and Mr Maxwell undertook to send me one, and I thought of course he would forget, but later on he wrote to say he regretted very much but the last chair that I wanted had been sold.

At twilight Mrs Labouchere and I went upstairs to see Dora, now the Marquesa di Rudini. She was two years old

and was having her bath, and, as the darkies say, she was a lump of sweetness, very fat and solid, quite unabashed and unafraid, with her father's dark eyes and mischiëvous glances. I begged one or two nice wet soapy kisses, which she gave me quite willingly, and we left her with a plump india-rubber doll-baby exactly her own shape to finish her bath.

Beerbohm Tree and his wife were also there. She wore a picture gown of cream lace and a Gainsborough hat, and he was most agreeable and likable. He took me into dinner, and I sat next Mr Labouchere, who rather damped my poetic enthusiasm about Pope's Villa. The poet had certainly built a villa on that site, but it had been destroyed, and a worthy Swiss had evidently designed and built the present one. This did not prevent the servants from showing, when the family was absent, the bedroom as the room where the poet died, to sightseers, and from reaping considerable benefit from their obligingness. When Pope built the grotto he had been sent by his admirers from all parts of the world bits of malachite, chrysophrase, bloodstone, onyx, sardonyx, the matrix of opal, and turquoise, and many semi-precious stones, with which he adorned the grotto. There were only two left: the remainder Mr Labouchere said had been plucked by the enterprizing tourist—the American probably, as he has a practical, acquisitive mind.

The happy day was at last ended, and having no carriage we went home in the train. This was the beginning of my friendship with the Laboucheres which was to form so large a part of my life in London.

They were then living in Queen Anne's Gate, a delightful old house looking on to St James's Park. We celebrated our first Christmas dinner with them. Among the guests were Whistler, Frank Miles, and George Augustus Sala. After dinner we played like so many children, and Whistler said that mistletoe was made for brides, and I was carried under a big bunch of mistletoe and told to be a good little girl and kiss everybody good night. I refused to obey, and nobody dared to kiss me except Whistler, and some absurd punish-

ment was devised for me by the others, and the party did not break up until one o'clock. That was twenty-five years ago, please remember !

Frank Miles was very handsome and agreeable, and a better gardener than artist. He gave Mrs Langtry the pretty name of the Jersey Lily, on account of the way her head drooped like a flower on its stem. His father had a fine garden, and he used often to go in the country just for the sake of digging and planting, and was always kind in sending me charming country nosegays. He was also a friend of the M'Carthys and I sometimes met him there. At this time they had a house in Ebury Street. Justin said it was a very nice little house, but there was no furniture in it. They went in one dark evening, and saw a pretty comfortable room, and were satisfied with this, and confidingly engaged the house, but when they came to live in it all the furniture had been moved for that one occasion into that one room.

CHAPTER XXXI

MY MYTHICAL REPUTATION

“ I was a princess once, and my talents were everywhere sung of.
I was indebted for my popularity not only to beauty but *to whit*.
Ah ! where is the destined prince that is to come to liberate and
to whoo ? ”

THACKERAY

JUSTIN M'CARTHY was one of the most delightful conversationalists I have ever known—a perfect encyclopædia of information ; a wonderful memory, with any amount of prose and verse, stored away for immediate application ; witty, gentle, and kind, he was universally popular. Justin Huntly was handsome and scintillatingly brilliant, and Charlotte was very pretty, and an excellent hostess, one of her accomplishments being that of a carver. She could deftly divide a partridge or a duck as well as the most accomplished *maitre d'hôtel*.

Soon after we were married we had a few friends to dine with us, among them a very conventional American. Charlotte at my request sat at the head of the table and carved, and very cleverly she did it. The American went to Paris and said it was a queer household, as Miss M'Carthy sat at the head of the table and did the honours, but Mrs T. P. did not seem to mind. If he had but known, he was lucky to have his neat morsel of chicken cut by such capable hands, for carving is not one of my accomplishments, nor is it T. P.'s.

The M'Carthys' household was a delightful one. They were all humourists and determined to take life as a huge joke. Justin was very ill at one time, and when Mr Curzon called, the stupid little parlour-maid went upstairs and said, “ Mr Crusoe would like to see you.”

“ Would he ? ” said Justin. “ Ask him up. His father was a very eminent mariner.”

One day at lunch T. P. was complaining of his chronic ill-health. Justin Huntly laughingly said, “ T. P. you are a remarkable speaker and a remarkable journalist, but above and beyond all, a remarkable, indeed, a wonderful invalid—always very ill, but at the same time perfectly well, and absolutely robust. I shall write an article and call it ‘ T. P. the Invalid.’ ”

At that period during a General Election T. P. could untiringly make seven and eight speeches a day, and often did, and two or three in one night, keeping up the pressure for six weeks, and being perfectly fresh at the end of the time. Indeed his health would improve after continual activity and work that would have worn out another and a differently constituted man.

Not long after we moved to Grosvenor Road there was a General Election, and T. P. was away speaking all over the country. His speeches were highly commended and complimented, and he arrived at home one night expecting more praise, when almost my first words were, “ I’ve made an awful mistake in the blue wall-paper, its much too dark and eats up all the light. You see London is so gloomy, so different from America, I did not realize that when I chose it.”

“ Really,” T. P. said, much irritated, “ and not one word about my speeches. Have you read them ? ”

“ Not *all* of them,” I answered, “ and the dado is the worst part—it’s much darker than the rest.”

“ What is a dado ? ” said T. P. “ And this is the interest you take in my career ! ”

Just then came the postman’s knock, the mail was brought in, and on opening an American paper, the first thing that caught my eye was an article saying there were three women in England who were intelligent politicians. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Lady Randolph Churchill, and Mrs T. P. O’Connor—that Mr O’Connor was not ashamed to acknowledge how much of his success he owed to his wife, who had indeed been of great assistance to him, in planning his present

brilliant election tour. I handed the paper to T. P. and said, "You see I am made a politician whether I am one or not: the American papers always praise their absent womenkind."

T. P. read the article with rather a grim smile, and said, "This fellow does not know your interest in daddoes. The American papers will say next that you wrote 'The Parnell Movement.'"

There is nothing indeed in life that has amused me more than my own reputation. It is a thing I have stood so apart and away from, and it is so utterly unlike the real, less interesting me. An Irish woman said to me once "Do you write 'M. A. P.'?"

I thought I had not heard her aright, and replied, "You mean do I write *in* 'M. A. P.'?"

"No," she said, "do you write the paper?"

I asked, "Do you mean from cover to cover?"

"Yes," she said, "I heard that you did."

"Oh," I said, "this is very interesting. Tell me what else you have heard about me."

She hesitated a moment and said, "Well I did hear that you wrote Mr O'Connor's political speeches."

"Well," I said, "I don't, but I'll tell you a secret—I *did* write *all* of Mr Gladstone's."

The lady had, although an Irishwoman, only a small sense of humour, and I left her looking rather bewildered.

Another friend travelling in Ireland was told that it was I who put the dynamite in the House of Commons, and that before I married Mr O'Connor I was in America the leader of a Fenian band. I have never known a Fenian band (I hope they are more in harmony than a German band, but doubt it) and I don't believe if I had they would have allowed me to lead them. I am not a good leader. I tried very hard to lead a small dog once, but it ended in his leading me, and in my most vaulting ambition I should not dream of leading even one tame Irishman, much less a dozen, and that dozen Fenians. I have never seen any dynamite, but I loathe both powder and temper explosions. They are very unnerving. A pretty house, birds, flowers, music,

books, and a circle of understanding friends, are more in my line than Fenians and dynamite ; they are less exciting it is true, but I want only peace and quiet, not noise or glory. Henry James speaks in one of his inimitable stories of a man who had the charm of being always at home. Well, I had another charm, that of being even from the beginning of my married life almost always alone. T. P. was a congenital bachelor, he loved men, and clubs, and political meetings, and speeches, and public dinners, and dining in the House of Commons, and long conferences with his confrères. The consequence was, as I once laughingly said to a friend, "I rarely see T. P., with all that he has to do, but when I do meet him out at dinner I still find him an agreeable man."

My cook, when I engaged her—an Irishwoman, and an original—had given me a Roland for an Oliver. After asking her various questions about how long she had been in her last place, her capabilities, etc., I said, "And now, cook, in the light of recent painful events, I must ask you a very direct question : Do you drink ?"

"No, Madam," she answered, "and I may say as I am looking for a place where the lady don't, as I've been very unlucky in my last places."

We then exchanged characters for sobriety, and she came to me the next day. She had been in the house three or four months when one morning at nine o'clock she informed me that a gentleman wanted to see me.

I said, "Isn't it rather early for a gentleman to call ? Who is he ?"

"I don't know, ma'am," she said, "I never saw him before."

"Where is he now ?" I asked.

"Using the telephone," she answered.

"What impudence !" I said,—and when I put on my most becoming *peignoir* and went downstairs it was T. P. ! Emerson, that gentle and comforting philosopher, says there is a law of compensation in everything. Maybe so. At any rate, when a woman marries a man who is in the strictest sense of the word a public man, giving his time, his geniality, his

energy, and his life, to the multitude, he inevitably becomes absorbed in outside interests, and his wife's compensation for loneliness must be pride in his reputation and his popularity. And of course she shines in reflected glory, and that, although not quite so glorious as her own glory, is a thousand times better than not shining at all. And there is another and not a poor compensation for having her time at her own disposal—the opportunity of forming close and devoted friendships. Mrs Labouchere once said to me that I was better off than most women, for I had two homes, hers and mine. And what could be pleasanter than a home where another woman has all the worry and responsibility and you have only the pleasure and amusement? And I adored Dora, who was a most quaint and attractive little child when she was only four, dancing prettily and reciting with great brilliancy “Where are you going to, my pretty maid?” holding up her skirts coquettishly, “I’m going a-milking, sir, she said.” And a little later, what an Ariel she made when Mrs Labouchere gave “The Tempest” in the garden of Pope’s Villa!—with her round little face, and her infantile grace, her diaphanous garments and her wings she looked an elfin thing just ready to fly away. Dora has fulfilled her promise of childish beauty, and is now as the Marquesa di Rudini one of the acknowledged loveliest women in Rome.

Naturally my first meeting with the Baroness Burdett-Coutts made a lasting impression on my mind. It was one afternoon in the height of the London season at Lady Jeune’s.

There was only a very small gathering: Mrs Jopling Rowe, brilliant, charming, and more beautiful than her celebrated portrait by Millais, Lewis Morris the poet, Thomas Hardy, that most gifted and most modest author, who had not yet written “Tess of the D’Urbervilles,” De Lara, and the Baroness, who was dressed in a charmingly old-fashioned manner. Her gown of deep purple silk was made with a rather full skirt, and a simple bodice belted in with the same material. There were lace ruffles at the neck and sleeves, and she wore a small black cape of embroidery and lace, and a close black bonnet trimmed in violets. Her ear-rings of

diamonds were long, and she carried a small silk bag of netted purple silk—neither long earrings nor handbags were worn at that period.

Lady Jeune presented me, and the Baroness was exceedingly gracious, asked where I lived, carefully wrote down the number, and said she would call to see me. De Lara at that moment was the most popular tenor in London. Knowing the Baroness's fondness for music, Lady Jeune asked him to sing, and he gave this poem of Owen Meredith's, set to his own characteristic music :

“ As the one star that's left in the morning
Is more noticed than all night's host,
As the late lone rose of October
For its rareness regarded the most,
As the least of the leaves of December
That is loved as the last on the tree,
So sweetest of all to remember
Is thy love's latest promise to me.

For to love it is hard, and 'tis harder,
Perchance, to be loved again,
But if living be not loving
Then living is not all in vain.
To the tears I have shed and regret not
What matters a few more tears ?
Why should love, that is present for ever,
Be afraid of the absence of years ?

When the snow's at the door and the ember
Is dim, and I far o'er the sea,
Remember, beloved, remember
That my love's latest trust was in thee.”

He sang magnificently, with great passion and expression, and both Lady Jeune and the Baroness went to the piano and thanked him warmly. I daresay now that he composes grand opera De Lara looks superciliously on the tuneful music of his youth, but it was very charming nevertheless. He was a most amiable man, and after hearing me sing a

little coon song, offered to cultivate my voice, but somehow, like so much else in my life, the opportunity slipped by and came to nothing.

With a good many visitors, the door bell to answer, and continual errands for T. P., one servant proved terribly inconvenient, and it was necessary to get a Buttons to open the door, clean the boots, and make himself generally useful. Knowing the unregenerateness of the genus boy, I determined on a nice religious one, brought up by the Christian Brothers. William was his name. He was represented as all I desired, good, quiet, conscientious, obedient, and no relatives. So the treasure came. He was a hopelessly dirty boy. The first thing he did was to make a black streak on the blue wall-paper from the top to the bottom of the stairs. His face was continually like the face of a sweep with coal dust, he broke every particle of china that he touched, and he had an instinctive aversion to opening the door. One afternoon I was busy, with my sleeves rolled up, arranging a cupboard, when I heard the door bell ring several times. Then I called "William," and after an interval the door was finally opened, and William appeared in my room with a navy blue face from grime and dust, and said sulkily, "There's an ould woman downstairs."

"Where is she?" I asked.

"On the mat," said William, and only when I had finished the cupboard and pulled down my sleeves did I descend to find the Baroness Burdett-Coutts standing in the hall!

I explained that William's only recommendation was his religion, that he had neither knowledge nor manners, and I begged her forgiveness for his rudeness. She was most amused, made anything but a ceremonious visit, and as she was leaving for Highgate asked me to come to tea with her there.

A few days after her visit my little son Toodie said to me, "If I tell you something you won't tell anybody?" I promised, and he said, "William says he is not going to clean his teeth with your tooth-brush any more—it's so hard it makes his gums bleed." And I fancy the brush had served

more purposes than one, for I once found a round black object in it, which on examination proved to be a bird seed. So I returned William, accompanied by my tooth-brush, to the Christian Brothers. And he had relations. One of them, a most stylish, bedizened young lady, his sister, called to ask why he had been dismissed. I afterwards met her in a Turkish Bath, where the attendant told me she came after her horseback rides in the park, as she was just learning to ride and the lessons made her rather stiff. She said she had lovely jewellery, and that a kind old gentleman friend always called for her, after her bath, in a carriage. So perhaps with her good fortune she educated her brother William.

CHAPTER XXXII

MY FAITHFULLEST FRIEND—MAX

“ For never man had friend
More enduring to the end,
Truer mate in every turn of time and tide.
Could I think we'd meet again
It would lighten half my pain. . . . ”

THERE are two things I remember about my visit to the Baroness at Highgate. She gave me a sprig of eucalyptus—it grows vigorously in Texas, and the aromatic odour was like a breath from home—and I noticed the portrait of a dog, a plebeian, with a stubby black muzzle, soft, beautiful, had-been-sad, patient eyes, a square, tenacious jaw, and an expensive collar. Of course he had a history—one saw it in his face. It seems in his youth he travelled in a circus, his “stunt” being to pick up live coals with his teeth. He grew quite an adept at this inhuman trick, curling up his lips, keeping his tongue back and taking what care he could, but with all that he was a scarred and hopeless performer; when the Baroness, by paying a high price, rescued him, won his everlasting gratitude and adoration, and gave him the happiest of homes until his death. She had a great love of animals, and it is to her that “Bobby” owes his handsome bronze fountain, which he surmounts with such alluring impudence in Edinburgh. “Bobby” was the dog of a carrier and always sat by his master and minded the cart when the parcels were being delivered. On a freezing day the man caught a cold and died of pneumonia. “Bobby” watched by the body, attended the funeral, and made the grave his future home. The sexton and the carrier’s

friends fed him, and there he remained in the churchyard for several years until he died—and I hope was buried by the side of his master. In bronze he looks a perfect comedian, with his turned-up, cock-sure little nose, his little paws turned out, and his woolly coat of rough hair. He evidently had a sense of humour, but, like many comedians and humorists, his heart became a tragedy of faithful grief. How well he deserves a statue—this unselfish, self-sacrificing, long-suffering, best friend of man !

In the autumn Toodie was being sent to school to Old Hall, Ware, and just before he left home, he and T. P. went out together to select a new suit for school. We were still very poor, and the clothes would take about all the money T. P. had in his pocket. I cautioned him to buy a serviceable tweed of a dark colour, and off they started. This was in the morning. Towards dusk, I heard an excitement downstairs and Toodie's voice saying, "Wait, I'll get milk for him." And when I went down a very noble collie looked up pathetically in my face, and wagged his tail. He had been bought at the dogs' home with the money for Toodie's clothes. They had also lunched out, and brought back a liberal selection of chocolates and a dog whip, which that wise and sweet creature Max Gladstone O'Connor never needed. We named him for Max (Toodie's friend in America), and for Mr Gladstone because his eyes were so Gladstonian ; his mobile eyebrows black, on a tan ground, were like Sir Henry Irving's. For the most part his eyes were limpid and beautiful, but they could be both eager and fierce. Mr Parnell said he had a strain of Gordon Setter, as his nose was too blunt for a pure collie. After he had been with us a few days, he gravely shook hands with me, and that sealed our everlasting friendship. He loved T. P. and Toodie, but I always remained first in his affections, and he knew my mind, grave or gay, as well as I did myself. He had been well trained, was obedient, and had the reasoning powers of a human being. His coat of black and tan was long and silky, and his tail was like a great feather. How so remarkable a friend had ever been abandoned it was impossible

to guess. Probably his owners were stopping only temporarily in London, and when they lost him were obliged to leave town at once. I spoke to him about his past life, once or twice, but it was evidently such a sore subject that I never mentioned it again. He very often went with T. P. to the House of Commons and used to sit in the lobby entrance in one of the tall-hooded leather chairs. On the second reading of the Irish Bill, in the excitement of the moment he was forgotten, and at three o'clock in the morning the door bell rang, and there was a policeman with Max, who had never moved from his seat. The late Dr Wallace gave a dinner at the House, and Max was invited, and sat at the right hand of the host: on the floor, it is true, but there he was. Dr Wallace had a caustic tongue, and said, "Max is the only four-footed member of the House of Commons, but plenty of them have long ears."

Max would wait hours in front of shops. Once I was so long that a policeman gathered him up and led him to a police station. That he considered a great disgrace, and it took him some time to recover his self-respect. He loved cabs. When I said to the maid, "Call me a cab," he darted downstairs, and the moment the cab arrived he jumped in. By looking dreamily straight ahead he hoped to avoid my eye, and if I said, "Max, you can't go," a sudden deafness overtook him. In his younger, more observant days he could follow any omnibus with me in it through the most crowded part of London. If I walked too long, he took a cab without consulting me, and I have often heard a cabby good-humouredly ask him if he had his fare with him. Once walking in Grosvenor Square I missed him, and found him sitting smiling on the back seat of a satin-lined landaulette drawn up in front of one of the great houses. The powdered, cockaded, liveried coachman and footman were looking amused, but had not made him unwelcome, and I had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to descend. He disliked all dogs, and never spoke to one if he could avoid it. When there was a bunch of dogs on the street he made a wide circle around them, but if a dog was ill or in trouble that

was a different matter. Then he considered it his Christian duty to care for him. One cold, rainy night in the winter we missed him. I called and called at the door, but he did not come. The next morning about ten he arrived, drank a vast quantity of water, but was too excited to eat, barked to go out, and when I opened the front door off he rushed. I followed him and found a very sick dog lying on the doorstep of a near-by empty house. A policeman told me that Max had been sitting by this dog all night, licking his face and giving him what comfort he could. The policeman carried the dog to the dogs' home, Max trotting at his heels; then Max came back and slept steadily for about fourteen hours.

His memory was extraordinary. He had been only once to Queen Anne's Gate, to the Laboucheres, when one afternoon Mrs Jopling was giving a musical party, and there I met Mrs Labouchere. We left together, Max, who had been waiting at the door, following behind. Mrs Labouchere asked if I was dining alone; I said yes, and she suggested that I had better come home and dine with her. I said I would, if she could stop a moment at my house on the way. Soon after this Max disappeared. Three-quarters of an hour afterwards when we arrived at her house, there was Max waiting on the steps for us. Now, unless he understood the conversation, why did he go there?

When we went to "The Star" building to live, he, like myself, loathed it. Boys were his particular antipathy, and there were always newsboys about, and he detested noise and commotion, loving quiet and order, so that that experience was not a happy part of his life. The watchman used to be relieved on Sunday, and then he went in the country to spend the day at Brixton, taking Max with him. When he left "The Star" and lived altogether at Brixton, every Sunday morning for months Max spent that day with him, starting off quite alone at seven o'clock in the morning, and coming back about the same hour in the evening.

There were two of my friends he adored—Cardinal Manning and Monsieur Johannes Wolff, the gifted violinist. He used very often to go quite alone to visit the Cardinal. We lived

a few doors from him after we left "The Star" building, and he would wait until the door of the palace opened, walk gravely up to his library, scratch at the door, go in, shake hands with his Eminence, and lie down before the fire at his feet. I remember going in one afternoon to see him, and the Cardinal said, "One member of your family is already here," and there was Max beaming upon me. The Cardinal added, "If you ever want a home for Max, he will find one with me."

For M. Wolff he reserved a special and individual attention that he gave to no one else, not even to me. M. Wolff would say, "Max, show your teeth, smile at me, smile at me," and Max curled back his mobile black upper lip, showing every tooth in his head. How we used to laugh at that wonderful smile of his! M. Wolff always rewarded him with loud and fulsome praise, and perfect as he was, he had a little vanity. He lived until he was nearly fifteen, and was thoughtful and wise to the very end of his perfectly blameless life.

When he was too deaf and his scent too faint for him to follow me when I walked, he took three hours' exercise every day alone—two hours in the morning from ten until twelve o'clock, and in the afternoon from three until four. I've often met him going at a steady trot down the embankment, or, if he felt in need of amusement, down the King's Road, or the Fulham Road.

What a grief his death was, and still is! He had suffered greatly from gastritis, and his poor face looked troubled and pained, but he smiled once very feebly, lifting his lip just a little when M. Wolff came to see him. I cried then. And they told me that he looked sweet and peaceful after he died, like the dear old Max who had been my faithfulest friend and closest companion for so many years. I could not bear to look closely at him, but from a distance I saw them carry him to the garden, and I called out, "Turn his face toward my window, and make his grave where the morning sun will shine upon it." And then tears hid the burying from my sight.

I intended to put a little stone at the head of his resting-place in Chelsea with "To the Memory of Max, beautiful, good and gifted," carved on it, but I never did, and it is just as well, now that Oakley Lodge is in other hands than mine ; and the epitaph is only in my heart, for I, who love all dogs, know there never was, or could be one like him, so sensible, so sweetly reasonable, so merciful, so wise, and so loving. If I ever can, I shall do something handsome for the Dogs' Home in the name of Max Gladstone O'Connor.

CHAPTER XXXIII

IN GERMANY—DAILY LETTERS FROM T. P.

IN the spring of this year Lawson Tait ordered me off to Kreuznach, Germany, for a long course of baths, as my health was very delicate. T. P. went with me, and Harold Frederic and his wife, who were going up the Rhine, came along, so we made a party of four. It was the month of June and Germany was as green as Ireland that year. We stopped in Cologne, saw the Cathedral, which with its wonderful architecture gives a great and impressive sense of space, and in the afternoon went to the Cemetery and looked for the grave of Judge Keogh, the Irish traitor, who is buried there, which T. P. wished to see, but we never found it. Harold Frederic at that time had written no novels—these came afterwards—was a most interesting companion. He was a man of great natural ability, having started in life without any educational advantages whatever. He began by being apprenticed on a farm, and used to boast that he could milk a cow better than he could write an article. He was even a better journalist than novelist; his letters from London to "The Times" were many of them of great brilliancy.

He had made a study of the Irish question, had travelled in the country, and was on intimate terms with a number of the Irish members, and his articles at the time of the division in the party were quoted all over America. He said to me while we were sailing up the Rhine. "When I was in America in March, I missed a train and had to stop the night at a small country hotel, and the only thing for me to read was a pile of old 'Harper's Weeklies'" (he was a

great reader, but acknowledged that he never could digest George Meredith), "and in one of the papers I read a story of yours. It *was* so bad—how could a clever woman like you do it?" (He believed in scratches with cold cream afterward!)

I laughed. His candour was delightful. "Dear Mr Frederic," I said, "I quite agree with you. I am neither a literary woman, nor a story-teller, but—I was poor, and had to live. The editor of 'Harper's Weekly,' my good friend, Mr Conant, accepted my stories, and after all they were not worse than some of the others."

"Oh yes, they were," Mr Frederic said, "worse than anybody's—hopeless. I read two—they were both equally bad. Conant had no excuse for accepting them, he was stretching friendship too far."

Mr Conant, who was for many years connected with the Harpers, was deservedly a most popular man. Amiable, cheerful, optimistic, clever and handsome, his end was an unfathomable mystery. He put his hat on, left the office for lunch, and no trace was ever heard of him again.

He sometimes invested in a lottery ticket, and through this source Fortune curiously enough twice slipped through his fingers. He and Mrs Conant were in Cuba at the time of the Grand Havana Lottery. A friend in New York had sent him a cheque asking him to invest the money in a lottery ticket for him, and he bought it with his own. Before posting it he said to his wife, "One of these may be the prize winner—I wonder which I had better send," and he finally despatched No. 999 (the actual number I forget). His friend promptly returned it, saying that times were hard and if Mr Conant could conveniently dispose of the ticket he would be grateful. Mr Conant then offered the ticket to his wife, saying that Fate surely had something up her sleeve in giving this particular number into his hands twice. Mrs Conant, who was perfectly free from superstition, begged that it might be sold, saying she would much prefer a new dress. He did sell it, and the next day No. 999 drew the Grand Prize of twenty thousand pounds! This so im-

pressed Mr Conant that he continued his investments in lottery tickets, and once drew four hundred pounds.

T. P. always wrote me a daily letter the four summers that I spent in Kreuznach. I have great numbers of them, but select at haphazard only one or two.

“ HOUSE OF COMMONS,

“ *Monday.*

“ DEAREST BESS,—I have only returned from Twickenham and am hurrying down to the House—being already very late. I got two letters from you to-day. The first arrived on Saturday night, after I had left, but I got Armstrong to send it on to me so that I had it by post early in Twickenham to-day. And then your second letter I found on my arrival here. I am always so glad to get one of your letters. I think you the prettiest letter-writer I ever read. Not that your letters are a bit clever ; but all the goodness of your heart comes out in them so clearly. When you were in America, I always rejoiced at a letter from you. It removed all misgivings, and doubts, and made me feel, even more than your presence or your talk, what precious treasures of love there were in your nature. I rejoice that my experience of marriage instead of decreasing has increased my affection. I certainly love you better every day. Your health is the one cloud that darkens our happiness ; and you are a good deal more feverish and fretful about that than I am. I would like you to be well and strong, of course, but I don't feel that even ill-health continued throughout marriage would in the least diminish my love for you. Therefore I feel worried sometimes to see you so desperate about it. I had quite a pleasant time at Labby's and will be out there again next Saturday. Mrs L. sends you a long letter to-day describing our life there. Last night we had two strange people at dinner—the Merivales. He is a clever dramatist but wild and eccentric, and has already been some time in an asylum. He talked all the time in a thunderous voice ; but still he was entertaining. I got a good London Letter out of the different people I had seen. I ought to go out more ; and then my

people would not have to complain of want of variety in my letters. When I got here I found a letter from Mr Blaine asking me to get his wife and daughter into the House this evening. I immediately despatched Armstrong with a letter telling them to be down at eight. Mrs Jeune gives a lunch in his honour next Thursday. She has invited me and I will go if I can. Several people have called—including Miss Ward of whom I have heard you talk. I was not in ; and she leaves London immediately. There is also a letter from a Miss Starkweather—or something like that—saying she and her mother are here. I will write and invite them down to the House of Commons.

“ No more just now from,—Your ever loving,

“ TOMSE ”

“ *Monday.*

“ DEAREST BESS,—The weather is frightfully bad in London. Constant rain, hideous cold. I have a cold in the head, my nose is red and swollen, and I can't speak without snuffling. I am writing this, as I sit in the House listening to Gladstone. The old boy is making a long speech full of vigour, and tho' his voice is now and then feeble he is on the whole in excellent form.

“ Your letter in ‘ The Star ’ of to-day. It was a wild and vehement attack on the position of women in English Society. You took your revenge for all the weary hours you have had of loneliness while I have been in the House and otherwise occupied. You must have been very down in the mouth when you wrote it. I'm rather glad that you have taken it out on ‘ The Star ’ instead of on me. The article will be largely read, I think. I am trying to get up a correspondence upon it. I have written a letter myself to ‘ The Star ’ to-day under the heading ‘ Are Englishmen kind to their women ? ’ It may blossom into something. I went yesterday evening to see Mrs Govett. She was quite plump in the face and had quite recovered from her illness. Your Lady White came in. The weather was hideous outside. We were all depressed and spoke outrageous cynicism.

Govett is away in Scotland. Dined at my Club, came home early, woke up with my cold worse, a disagreeable taste in my mouth and a general miserableness. But I worked it off, stuck to business hard all day ; have made arrangements in the country which I think will help forward the circulation. I then drove down to the House.

“ Gladstone has just ended his speech in a splendid outburst, he has put Hartington and the other Unionists in a great hole.

“ Have sent you cartloads of papers to-day.

“ No more from your much abused but deserving 'usban,
“ TOMSE

“ Rammie has lost his way several times lately and returned to my room and affections.”

Rammie was a most fascinating but unfaithful German dog, that T. P. had picked up in a peasant's hut. He subsequently left us entirely for the night watchman, went with him to Brixton, and left him eventually for two wealthy ladies who visited the watchman during an illness. They had a carriage-and-pair, and one day he entered it, refused to get out, so they bought him, and he ended his days with bow-knots of ribbons on his head driving around Hyde Park.

The post in the morning was my greatest pleasure, although Kreuznach itself is a pretty, delightful, healthy little place ; and how beneficial the strong brine baths are ! Reinforced by mutterlauger (motherlye), the water in a concentrated form, they are wonderful for all sorts of chronic illnesses. My first year there, I took ninety baths. All April, May and June I spent there, but interrupted my cure to return for the month of July to London. How delightful it was to get back home again ! Max had a regular hysteria of joy.

CHAPTER XXXIV

"MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," AND GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

THE day after my return I went to Twickenham, where Mrs Labouchere was busy arranging for the production of "Midsummer Night's Dream." It was to be given in the beautiful garden of Pope's Villa, under the light of the moon, with an orchestra to render Mendelssohn's music—that divine fairy music, so interpretive of all the poet's dreams. The disposition and character of the garden lent itself perfectly to the play, and never was there a more grassy, daisy-pied, flowery, softly-rolling background provided for Shakespeare's fascinating fantasy. Clumps of lilies and Canterbury bells grew just where they were wanted, and a bed of roses was not too far away. A noble old tree with gnarled roots in the centre was chosen for the stage. The huge branches, like a monster umbrella, dipped down here, and there, quite low enough for Puck to swing upon. The musicians were hidden from view behind a screen of honeysuckle and trumpet flowers. The electric lights glowed through blossoming foliage, and a moon was provided in case the real one, which was due, should hide her silver face behind a cloud.

The dress rehearsal came at last. Mrs Labouchere had admonished Mr Sala (Bottom) whose memory was unreliable, "to take pains and be perfect," but even while wearing the head of the ass, he clung to his book. "You can't do that," she said, "the night of the performance." "Give me," he answered, "a whisky and soda instead, and you will find I'll rise to the occasion," and he kept his promise and was most excellent in the part.

The great night followed the dress rehearsal, and the weather was superb—a midsummer's night warm enough to make a gentle breeze grateful, and the crickets chirped applause even before Puck (dainty, auburn-haired Rose Norreys) appeared under the tree. Who can forget her gay vibrating voice, "I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes," and speeding like a bird she flew into the darkness. And then Titania (lovely Kate Vaughan) that exquisite fairylike vision, came floating from an emerald vista, like a cloud of iridescent fireflies. She was clothed in a rose gossamer garment flecked in spangles, which revealed her classic limbs, and on her perfect head a little crown glittered with stars. Her attendant fairies, in green and gold and white and mauve, followed in her wake, and then Titania listens to their song and sleeps. That plotting Oberon comes along (Lady Archibald Campbell) as fairylike and diaphanous as Titania, with his bewitched flower juice, and drops it on her eyelids—

"In thine eye that shall appear,
When thou wak'st it is thy dear ;
Wake when some vile thing is near.
When in that moment—so it came to pass,
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass."

And there was exquisite Titania weaving garlands of natural flowers around Bottom's hairy head, and winsome Puck, sitting on a branch of the tree, laughing to see Oberon's magic do its mischievous work. The soft breeze stirred Titania's sparkling draperies to the despair of Sir Frederic Leighton, who said he could never hope in his most artistic moments to reproduce them. It was the first appearance of the alluring dancer in Shakespeare, but her soft caressing voice and perfect intonation suited the poetical rhythm as if she had spent her life studying blank verse.

Another woman of great loveliness in the caste was Dorothy Dene, and that night was her most beauteous moment. Sir Frederic Leighton designed and superintended her dress, which was pure Greek, and the silver fillet binding

her curling hair, and her severely simple white draperies embroidered in a pattern of silken thread, suited her noble beauty as no other costume could have done.

Miss Fortescue, then in the zenith of her pink and white beauty, was Hermia, all in glistening white, with her gold hair bound with gold, and the men were as good-looking as the women. Claude Ponsonby, with his straight features and fair silky beard, was Demetrius, and Luxmore Marshall, tall, straight and graceful, might have passed as his twin brother. When Demetrius and Hermia, Lysander and Helena, wandered all together, "the lovers full of joy and mirth," with real moonlight shining upon them, for the moon had promptly taken her cue, and was not a minute late, the audience burst into rapturous applause. Saucy Puck, like a silken grasshopper with flaming red hair, in her arresting insistent voice ended the play:

"To show our simple skill, that is the true beginning of our end,
Our true intent is all for your delight."

A cloud obscured the moon. "Midsummer Night's Dream" was over. The realities were upon us once more. The audience, who had partaken of high tea before the moon rose, rushed off for carriages and trains, leaving the caste and a few friends staying in the house for supper, which was scarcely less exciting than the play. Every one was under the spell of fairyland still. Mr Sala made a most charming and pretty little speech in honour of the Stage Manager, Mrs Labouchere; who was so touched by it that she left her chair and gave him a fairy kiss on the top of his kind, bald head—and we all drank her health, and the health of the lovers and the fairies and the elves.

Puck meanwhile, contrary to history, had garbed himself in white, lace and orange ribbons, and was flirting outrageously with Demetrius. Mr Labouchere, who had possibly during the play been discussing Home Rule or the abolition of the House of Lords with an Irish Member, was rescued, borne to the head of the table, and beamed on us all, drank his wife's health in champagne (which he dislikes)

and was as merry, as young, and as full of quirks and quips as Puck himself. The moon went to bed before we did, but we never missed her, for that was a night when the gods were good.

All girls have loved the novels of William Black. "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," "A Princess of Thule," and his earlier romances, are particularly appealing to youth. He, Thomas Hardy, and Kenneth Grahame divide the honours in realistic descriptions of scenery, so vividly done that with William Black you gulp draughts of the strong salt air of the North Sea. The soft summer breeze of the English Downs stirs your hair with Kenneth Grahame, and your hand involuntarily reaches out to gather apples in the orchard with Thomas Hardy. It is a wonderful gift, this bringing the sights and sounds and odours of Nature into the dreariness and dinginess of a London house on a foggy afternoon in mid-winter.

Mr Black was one of the personalities whom I wished to meet. He and Mrs Black (who was the veritable lady of the Phaeton) had left London, and were living in Brighton on the East Cliff, in a very pretty, old-fashioned house, and among the modern pictures was a fine one by Abbey, for whom Mr Black had a very great admiration. It was originally called "A Bible Reading in the time of Shakespeare," but the title was subsequently changed to "On Stormy Ground." It was really a development of one of Mr Abbey's beautiful illustrations of Mr Black's "Judith Shakespeare," that delightful book jointly illustrated by Edwin Abbey and Alfred Parsons. "McLeod of Dare," a novel that touched me deeply, was also admirably illustrated.

Every morning William Black walked for hours on the old pier, in solitary meditation, for scarcely anyone went there except himself. The glasses that he always wore did not hide the brightness of his observant brown eyes, and with his closely cut hair, trim moustache, wind and sun tanned face, and alert bearing, he looked an open air man rather than a journalist or novelist.

I remember particularly one pleasant dinner we had at

his house : himself and his cheery agreeable wife, George Augustus Sala, T. P., Mrs Nye Chart, and three or four friends who had come down from London. The guest who carried off the honours of the evening (for some reason or other he was in a most scintillating mood) was George Augustus Sala. Each person recounted the most horrible story of his *répertoire*. The only one lingering in my memory was the one told by George Augustus Sala, called "The Blind Wife." A man met an exceedingly beautiful girl and married her. She had been born blind, and there was no hope of sight ever illuminating her heavenly blue eyes. Her character did not correspond with the eyes, as she had a waspish temper. She was mysteriously knowing about the shade of curtains and carpets ; if they did not match she raged. Milliners and dressmakers also suffered, as she was more exacting as to the perfection of work than those who could see. Also, she knew by some extraordinary method the whole contents of her husband's post (which doubtless was embarrassing to him, as a blind wife would be of great convenience to most men) and, unless she was a witch, how did she find out things only discoverable by sight ? The husband became suspicious and unnerved, and consulted the greatest oculists of the day, but they said with one accord, "Blind from birth." And still she knew all that occurred in the house as one of keenest vision. One night she refused to go to a ball with her husband, and he, worrying over the paradox of his wife being able to see and still being blind, returned home unexpectedly from the ball, and found her sitting at his writing-table reading a love letter. But how ? Her *peignoir* was unfastened and thrown back from her shoulders ; her bosom was uncovered and in the centre of each breast was a terrible eye ! *Quelle surprise pour Monsieur !*

It would not of course entitle a man to a divorce to have his wife's eyes in the wrong place. This state of affairs has been known to exist many times. If a man has what he calls "private affairs" and his wife's eyes regard them, they are always in the wrong place—but even then, eyes for a woman

are not necessary. There is instinct—George Moore says every woman knows when the wolf is at her door. But if she does what can she do? The wisest thing is to leave the man to be gobbled up, for if the wolf is really at the door it is by the man's invitation. A clever wife may, on occasion, make her husband go her way, but never, never, if he has begun to go some other woman's way. And the wolf's way and the wife's way are so essentially different—there might as well be a parting at once.

George Augustus Sala was a very remarkable journalist; he could write on almost any conceivable subject. His mind was more assimilative than original, but he knew a great deal, and how to apply it. Also he realized his own limitations, and was quite without vanity. The late Mr Levy of the "Daily Telegraph" once asked him: "Mr Sala, have you any objection to our editing your copy in the office?" "Mr Levy," Mr Sala answered, "I am like a butcher. I sell you so much meat—to me it is a matter of profound indifference whether you serve it fried, boiled, or roasted."

This reply from a seasoned journalist might serve as a lesson to many a budding writer. Mr Sala had, in the long years of his service as a journalist, managed, composed and arranged for himself a great number of books of reference. He was very methodical, and with his superb memory it was possible for him to turn out a readable article in a very short space of time. His first marriage was a most fortunate one. Mrs Sala was handsome, sensible, and a genius as a cook and housekeeper. He was never (except for occasional spurts of brilliancy) the same after her death. He had her head frescoed on the hall ceiling of their pretty, old-world house in Mecklenburgh Square, so that he might on entering the hall look up and be welcomed by her, and her dresses he still kept hanging in the cupboards among his own clothes, saying that only to see a garment she had worn gave comfort to his grieved and lonely soul.

At the first little tea-party given after he became a widower, his friends discovered in a little case close to his writing-table, where by turning his eyes he could see them, his wife's

thimble and needles and threads, and keys, and scissors, and watch and purse—all the small intimate things of her daily life. It was his habit while he worked to touch them with his hand, saying, "My dear, my poor dear!" She had been indeed his better, saner helpmate and friend; for, when he was irascible and inclined to quarrel with his editors, it was his wife who smoothed out differences and made the peace for him. Without knowing it he had leaned upon her strong common-sense and her judgment, and he was never to find rest and peace without her. His last days, in spite of the fine income he had made, were spent in pain and humiliation, although lightened by the kindness of disinterested friends like Lord Burnham, Henry Labouchere and others, who left nothing undone for him. But his valuable library had to be sold, including his reference books. When he realized his loss he wept bitterly and begged to have them back again, saying, "My children, my children—my books, my dear books that were my children! Give them back to me! Give them back to me!" He wailed out this cry all through the night and never fully recovered again.

"Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the midnight hours
Weeping and waiting for the morrow,
He knows you not, ye Heavenly Powers!"

I pray that when the morrow came after his weeping and waiting the Heavenly Powers were merciful in giving him back his "poor, poor dear one" for all eternity!

With his exuberant health and bright spirits, William Black looked as if he would live for years, and yet he is sleeping in the pretty churchyard at Rottingdean, near the sea, which he loved so well, and only a few feet away from his friend, Sir Edward Burne-Jones—whom I met only once, in the studio of Henry Holiday, that distinguished artist, the executor of the beautiful stained-glass window designed by Edward Burne-Jones which so adorns and distinguishes the quaint little church of Rottingdean.

One of the most touching pictures in all the world to me

is, "The Merciful Knight" by Burne-Jones. The first time I saw it the pitiful tears came to my eyes. The rude cross is by the wayside, with the rugged figure of Christ, which has slightly loosened itself from the Cross and is bending over the kneeling knight, who, with bowed head, is praying for moral courage not to fight. How often the highest and noblest courage is to leave the sword in its scabbard! That turning of the other cheek—oh dear, how difficult! When Toodie was about four years old, we were at the Berkeley Springs in Virginia, and he came to me where I was sitting with a group of friends on one of the wide porticos, crying, and said, "Mamma, a boy hit me!"

"Did you," I said, "hit him back?"

"No, I didn't," the child answered.

"Then," I said, "go straight back and hit him."

Fanny Tate, a charming, fascinating woman from South Carolina, with the heavenly accent and drawl of that dear country, said, "It's plain to be seen this child's mother is from Texas."

I hadn't seen "The Merciful Knight" then.

CHAPTER XXXV

RED INDIANS AND THE MAZE

WHEN Buffalo Bill brought the " Wild West " show to London for the first time, it was a colossal success, and he was overwhelmed by hospitality, which he returned with a number of American lunches cooked by his friend, Colonel James, who, like the late Sam Ward, was a *cordon bleu*. The dishes were typically American, and the menu consisted of :—

Corn beef hash, and buttered corn bread.

Chickens fried in cream, green peas and hot biscuits.

Porterhouse steak and corn fritters.

Peach ice cream.

Cheese.

Superb coffee.

Cocktails in abundance.

After the lunch, visiting the cowboys and the Indians, it occurred to Mrs Labouchere to ask all the chiefs and their families to spend a Sunday at Twickenham, and to see the inside of an English house. They accepted the invitation eagerly, and were expected about 2 o'clock on the Sunday following, but not later than ten in the morning I ran into Mrs Labouchere's bedroom and cried, " Henrietta, the Indians have come ! "

As it was Sunday morning and we were taking things in leisurely fashion, nobody was dressed, and there they were for a good long day—Indian braves, squaws and babies, all in costumes befitting a visit to a great white chief, as they were instructed Mr Labouchere was, a chief in Parliament.

We made quick toilettes, and were soon downstairs, where they were all assembled. The interpreter said they had been up since dawn and he had had difficulty in keeping them from starting on the seven o'clock train to Twickenham.

A steam-launch had been engaged to convey them to Hampton Court, and while waiting for its arrival they were shown the garden, and Mr Labouchere told them to help themselves to gooseberries and red currants—whereupon they descended upon the bushes like devouring locusts, and in a very short time there was not a berry, ripe or green, left.

The great chief, "Up the River," looked like a feathered Gladstone. His face was fine and even noble, and he was not the least overawed by anything he saw. He reared his crest like a hawk and looked around the garden as if he owned it, and leisurely seating himself with his braves all around him in a circle, he signified to the interpreter his desire to make a little speech to the White Chief. He said, "My heart thanks you for remembering the Red Man and for asking him to your wigwam. My heart is happy with the beauty of this country and this garden, and I will never forget this day. When the great White Chief visits my country, my heart will be filled with joy, and I will send him a message of welcome from my heart."

Surely this was the speech of a courtier, and Mr Labouchere replied with equal politeness.

Their gay costumes, brilliant feathers, and brown painted faces looked most picturesque on the launch. Nothing escaped their bright watchful eyes, and at Hampton Court, when they were shown the Maze, Mrs Labouchere settled herself for a comfortable rest, but lo, they were no sooner in at one end, than out they came at the other. They did not even know it was a Maze—to them it was only a pleasant simple little walk. There was quite a crowd collected by this time, but they were apparently oblivious of everybody, and without a turn of the head walked as proudly as if alone in a primeval forest. Was it not Washington Irving who, in a burst of admiration, said, "The only gentleman in America was the Red Indian"?

After the voyage back, an old English dinner, a grand affair, was set on the leafy balcony of Pope's Villa. There was roast beef, baked potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, chicken and peas, and a Christmas plum pudding. The roast beef was very popular; they ate a few peas and drank tea and coffee, but the pudding was carried away in a beaded bag, which each Indian wore at his side. The bag already contained a wonderful mixture of gooseberries, grapes, biscuits, cigarettes, and cake. When Mrs Labouchere said, "More meat," one of the young Indians looked at her with a broad smile, and the Interpreter explained that Moremeat was his name, that he was a Chippeway, and then Mr Labouchere discovered him to be a descendant of one of the friends of his very earliest youth.

Nearly sixty years ago Henry Labouchere, then an adventurous lad, made a journey in the West of America. Minneapolis was at that time called St Anthony's Falls, and while he was there a far-seeing young chemist begged him to buy the land on which Minneapolis stands—it was to be sold for a very small sum, now it is worth many millions. He travelled still farther west with the Chippeways, who were going to their hunting fields. The great chief, "Hole in Heaven," was very friendly with him, and he camped in one of their wigwams for six weeks, the sister of the Chief being assigned to wait upon him. She cooked game to perfection, roasting wild birds in clay and larger game before a fire. The game in those days was very plentiful and tame, not having found out man to be their avowed enemy. Sometimes prairie chickens came near enough to be knocked on the head, and great herds of buffaloes still ranged the plains. The Indians often killed a buffalo, but Mr Labouchere was not lucky enough to get one for himself. He saw an Indian War Dance, but discreetly from a slit in the door of his wigwam, as "Hole in Heaven" said that, friendly as they were, at this sacred rite a white face might infuriate them even to the use of the tomahawk. And another most interesting custom was seeing the youths of the tribe transformed to braves. This is done by physical suffering, inflicted by other warriors.

The greater the torture, the greater the brave. Sharpened sticks are run through the tender skin on the breast, and forcibly pulled out, making when healed great scarred ridges of flesh. Leather thongs are bound round ankles and wrists until they cut into the flesh like a knife, leaving it raw and bleeding. These and other tortures the young Indian bears without a murmur, but sometimes a coward is found who utterly refuses all hurt ; even a good venomous scratch will save him from utter disgrace, but if he refuse this much, the penalty is an apparent change of sex. He wears a squaw's dress until the ban is lifted. To the uninitiated eye the difference is nothing, as women and men dress so much alike, but to the Indian it is everything.

Mr Labouchere lingered among these American gentlemen until the last steamer had departed from Fond du Lac, so he was obliged to travel in a canoe until he reached the eastern end of the lake—and these early experiences have always kept his interest in the Red Man alive.

CHAPTER XXXVI

IN GERMANY IT IS THE LAW

ONE summer in Schwalbach a philanthropic English woman asked a *belle dame* from Florida, "And don't you like the negroes?"

"Very much," the American answered, "in my kitchen. I don't want them in my drawing-room."

Now this lady's attitude to the negro represents mine to the calf. I love him in the field—I don't want him on the dining-room table. It is hard, however, to escape him in Germany, where he seems one of the staple products of the country—and a tragic moment arose in my experience when unless I resorted to extreme measures it was impossible to get away from him at all. It grew, as these things do, out of a thoughtless piece of advice given by a most convincing Englishman. It was a heavenly sunshiny day and we were walking to the station preparatory to my making a journey to Baden-Baden, which is comparatively near Schwalbach; but requiring four changes, with waiting here and there, to make connections it bade fair to be a whole day's journey.

As we passed a field a number of spotted calves frisked gaily in the sunshine.

"Dear me," I remarked, "how surprising that so many calves are left in Germany."

My friend replied, "That's because we've boycotted veal in our hotel."

"Now where," I asked, "can one find a hotel in Wiesbaden where veal is boycotted, or do you know a good restaurant there?"

My faith in man is perennial, in spite of the many times

he has disappointed me. I go on asking for advice, taking it, and suffering afterwards just the same, instead of using my own better judgment. There is something so cocksure about the way a man tells you anything that somehow, in spite of yourself, you feel he *must* be right. So when my friend answered confidently, "Don't go to a hotel or restaurant at all—just take lunch in the station," it seemed quite the best thing to do.

"I recollect," he went on, "having such an appetizing meal once in quite a small German station: fresh eggs, broiled chicken, and green peas,"—and he talked so well, and so eloquently, about that *déjeuner* that I got quite hungry before he finished, and would not have eaten lunch anywhere but in a German railway station.

On arriving at Wiesbaden I too would order chicken, peas and fresh eggs, served in the waiting-room. I must say the griminess of the room and the stale smell of beer was not suggestive of a crisp meal, but still under the spell of broiled chicken I asked cheerfully of the waiter, "Was haben Sie?"

Waiter: "Kalbs Kotlett und Kartoffeln."

Me: "Nichts Anderes?"

Waiter: "Nein, das Kotlett ist aber sehr gut."

I was already tired, and with the prospect of a day's travel before me it seemed wise to eat something; and I was reluctant to go to the town. My luggage had yet to be labelled and the tickets to be bought, but the ticket office was still "geschlossen," so I succumbed to the force of circumstances and ordered a veal cutlet and fried potatoes.

My seat at the table was by the side of a woman who had already given her order, and presently the waiter returned bearing her lunch. On a thick, large plate reposed a peninsular-shaped cutlet, the size of a small ham. It was submerged in thick, greasy gravy; and on another plate a mound of fried potatoes had been carefully built up, with bubbles of fat still sizzling on them—and I had been sent all the way from England to Germany to cure my indigestion! I gazed upon this stupendous sight with horror. It was not necessary to *eat* to induce discomfort—the sight and the

smell was enough. I was already suffering agonies. Calling the waiter, I countermanded the order.

"I cannot eat the cutlet—I am ill," I explained.

"But you must eat it," the waiter answered. "In Germany if you order a good kalbs cutlet you must eat it."

"But I am ill!"

"Es schadet nichts. You ordered it. It will be got ready. You must pay for it."

Ah, there was the crux. "*You must pay for it.*"

"No," I answered, "I countermanded the order at once. I won't eat the cutlet, and I won't pay for it." Then I got up and went to the office to buy my tickets. Presently there was a tumult. The waiter appeared with the man who owned the cutlet.

"There, there is the English dame who won't take the Kotlett," the waiter was excitedly saying.

The man approached me. "Are you the lady who ordered the Kalbs Kotlett and won't eat it? You must. In Germany one may not order a Kotlett and not eat it."

Receiving no answer they retired, but it was only in order to gather a reinforcement to continue hostilities. Meantime the luggage having been registered I had gone to the other side of the station in the wake of my trunks. Suddenly the waiter reappeared, his face scarlet with emotion, his hair standing up like a cockatoo's. He was accompanied by the man and a woman, all of them talking vociferously with the countersign "Kalbs Kotlett." They all appealed to me. The waiter actually wrung his hands with anguish.

The woman said, "Eine Englische Frau die sich eine Dame nennt und sich weigert ein schönes deutsches Kalbs Kotlett zu essen, das ist unverschämt!" ("An Englishwoman, calling herself a lady, to refuse to eat a good German veal cutlet—it was shameful.")

The man said, "So, so! We shall see."

They then laid the case before the guard of the train, who listened with much interest, but said he could not interfere. "Tickets,"—yes, if I gave him any trouble about my

tickets they should see. A Kalbs Kotlett was not his province, so, reprehensible as my conduct was, they must settle it themselves.

The restaurant man said something *must* be done. The woman said, "Send for the Polizei." The waiter scuttled off hatless and breathless, quickly returning with a big, good-looking, steady-eyed policeman.

"What is the trouble?" he said.

The waiter, the restaurant keeper, and the woman, all talked breathlessly together.

"The English dame had commanded a Kalbs Kotlett; then she wouldn't eat it, and she wouldn't pay for it. What was to be done?"

The Polizei fixed me with a stern eye and began, "Warum haben Sie das Kalbs Kotlett nicht gegessen?"

My answer was, "I don't speak German."

The waiter interposed, "Oh, but she does—she speaks very good German, and understands Alles."

The Polizei waved him aside. "Warum haben Sie das gute Kalbs Kotlett nicht gegessen?" Like Brer Rabbit, "I laid low and said nothin'." He continued, "In Germany, if one orders a Kalbs Kotlett, one must eat it and pay for it, or pay for it if one eats it not. That is the law."

The waiter, the restaurant man, and the woman all solemnly repeated, "That is the law."

The guard said, "That is the law." One or two outsiders to whom the waiter had explained the situation said, "That is the law."

Still the prisoner at the bar remained silent. Suddenly the empty blue eyes of the Polizei lighted up with wonderful intelligence. "Bring the Kotlett," he said. "Bring the potatoes," he said.

The waiter shot by me like an arrow from a bow. In a second he ran back, carrying a twin Kotlett to the first peninsular-shaped one I had seen, and a second pyramid of fried potatoes, both of which he reverently placed on my trunk.

The Polizei began to look hungry. He looked affec-

tionately at the Kotlett. "Ein sehr gutes Kotlett," he said. "Why haven't you eaten this good cutlet?"

A wicked plan entered my head. I would have revenge.

"Wie viel?" I asked the waiter.

"Zwei mark fünfzig."

I laid the money on the trunk. He pounced on it like a hawk on a tomtit.

"So," said the Polizei.

"So," I repeated, and with a quick deftness of which I thought myself incapable, I threw the cutlet in the middle of the station, just grazing the leg of the law, and it was quickly followed by a generous shower of fried potatoes.

The policeman gave a suppressed cry, as if a knife had stabbed him to the heart. I had thrown away his dinner, his nice greasy dinner for which I had paid.

"In Deutschland ist es nicht erlaubt Kotletts und kartoffeln auf dem Bahnhof zu werfen. Es ist nicht erlaubt." (In Germany it is not allowed to throw cutlets and potatoes in the station—it is not allowed.)

For the first time since I ordered the cutlet my tongue was loosed. "What can you throw in a station?" I asked.

Solemnly he replied, "Not potatoes—not Kalbs Kotlett."

Again a gleam of intelligence entered his bovine eye. "Sie müssen es aufheben." (You must pick them up.) "In Germany if you throw potatoes and Kalbs Kotletts in a station you must pick them up. That is the law."

"Never," I answered. "Never." (The train was just starting—I became bold.) "I will leave you to pick them up."

This impudence was followed by a few seconds of horrified silence, then the voice of the woman pierced it in a shrill scream.

"Ach, Gott in Himmel! Die Englische Dame has ordered the Polizei to pick up the cutlet and the potatoes!"

The Polizei said, "In Germany it is the law——"

Then a great clamour arose, but I jumped on the train, which was just moving out of the station. And as far as I could see, the brilliant sun lighted up the fine, silver helmet of the Polizei, the bronze brown of the Kalbs Kotlett, and the pale gold of the fried potatoes.

CHAPTER XXXVII

SHIPS THAT PASS IN THE BROAD DAYLIGHT

IN all the many summers spent by me in Germany, I had never seen Heidelberg. Hand-made scars, smooth scars, ridged scars, manufactured by Heidelberg duels—yes, deep red scars, purple scars, and white scars, proudly worn on the plump cheeks of the young officers who, well corseted, clicked their spurs together in Wiesbaden, in Homburg, in Kreuznach, and in Schwalbach—all these I had seen, but not Heidelberg. The scars were only amusing, and Heidelberg I knew to be beautiful. So I determined, in spite of being the loneliest and the worst traveller in the world, always late and always anxious and distracted, to break my journey from Schwalbach to Baden, at Heidelberg.

The weather was so lovely that I stayed at a country hotel beyond the town, and wandered solitarily over the wonderful romantic ruins of the Castle by moonlight. The hotel gave me an excellent little dinner, and—an unusual thing for me—I slept deeply and dreamlessly until late the next morning. When the Boots knocked at my door there was barely ten minutes for me to dress and to take a hasty cup of coffee in my room. I asked in my best German—which as usual miscarried—"Am I to be alone in the omnibus?"

"Yes, yes," the porter said, "hurry if you wish to catch the train"—and down I rushed pell-mell, thinking to finish the details of my toilette in the omnibus. The ribbons of my shoes were flowing, my cuffs were unbuttoned, my neck-tie not yet tied, my hat-pins, veil and belt were in my hand, and my gloves were stuffed in my little hand-bag. Trembling like a leaf, I was handing out tips to the last moment, and

when I was pushed and literally fell into the omnibus, there sat a tall, fair, composed, immaculate being with monocle, umbrella tightly wrapped, gloves well fitting, and overcoat neatly folded by his side, regarding my discomfiture with a kindly wooden expression, too polite to allow even the slightest *soupson* of a smile to appear on his well-groomed face. So I composed myself, tied my necktie and pinned it, buttoned my cuffs, buckled my belt, put my watch in it, straightened my hat, prodded it with hat-pins, pinned on my veil, and was just about to descend upon my shoes, when the Monocle said in very good authoritative English, "Pardon, permit me,"—and leaning forward, instantly the shoe-strings were tied in good, firm, wouldn't-come-undone bows; then, lifting his hat, he sat up very straight again and considerably looked out of the window.

I said to myself, "He's married, he's a good husband, he ties his wife's shoes, he likes all women—and he's a nice, safe creature." By the time my gloves were buttoned we had reached the station. He lifted his hat again and asked if he could attend to my luggage. I said he could, and he did. Also at the very last moment he had to leap from the train, dash back to the omnibus and rescue my Tiffany umbrella—the one with a tortoiseshell handle so well known, and so often found, at Scotland Yard. What with the toilette, the shoes and the umbrella, by the time the train started there was quite a domestic atmosphere between us. At any rate he had some sort of understanding of my helplessness, and I of his good nature and obligingness.

He sat down beside me in the train and we began to talk. He told me he was a Swede, a civil engineer, who had worked for five years at his profession in London, hence his good English. He lived in Stockholm, and was on his way to an International Convention of Engineers at Baden-Baden. He had married a lovely Norwegian, who had dreamed of becoming a great singer, and had studied in Paris with Grieg's encouragement, who said she might develop into a Christine Nilsson in time, but the Monocle bade her choose between a career and himself, and now she was singing lullabies to the

first baby. He brought forth a little leather case from his pocket, and there was Madame, a radiant blonde, and the baby, so fat that his wrists and ankles seemed tied with string, and his broad smile showed four fine Norwegian teeth, and he looked altogether a credit to his parents. The Monocle was a most fond and proud father, and when I said his offspring looked a baby Viking he was amazingly pleased.

In the course of the conversation, which covered many subjects, he spoke of "M. A. P.," and said he had learned much of his English from it, and his choice of English literature was decided by the "Book of the Week" in the "Sunday Sun." I informed him that my husband edited both of the papers, and then we were completely in sympathy and at our ease. He told me that he was arresting his journey to Baden-Baden by stopping at Carlsruhe for a couple of hours—he wanted to see the Castle of the Grand Duke of Baden-Baden, as the Crown Princess of Sweden had been born there, and in a small gallery there was a noted collection of etchings, and the Botanical Garden was among the celebrated small ones of Europe, containing many rare and beautiful plants. Wouldn't I—and he was very deferential—"make him a great pleasure and stop over for a couple of hours at Carlsruhe: all tourists should see Carlsruhe"—the Botanical Garden was the bait, for I will travel any distance to see a garden—and trusting that no tourists would be in Carlsruhe except ourselves—for how could I introduce a man whose name I didn't know, and was too polite to ask? Fortune favoured me—we had the place to ourselves, and the miniature castle and little red-nosed soldiers were vastly amusing, and just suited our innocent adventure. A Grand Duchess de Gerolstein with *le sabre de mon père* was alone needed to make the scene perfect. The etchings were nothing, but the garden, with the hot August sun shining on its wealth of flowers and blossoming shrubs, and bringing out the myriad different odours, was divine.

The Monocle spoke excellent German, and induced the gardener to part with a big bunch of lemon verbena which

I tied up in my pocket-handkerchief. It was a pungent reminder of that Arabian Nights garden of my youth where almost everything known in botany bloomed under the persuasive genius of my mother's hand.

We lunched on the balcony of an open-air restaurant, with honeysuckle and purple passion-flowers dangling over our heads. The rescued umbrella tilted against my chair, the restaurant dog leaning his head against me, and a bottle of *Liebfrauenmilch* was daintily folded in a napkin between us. We were talking only about seeds and grafting, but the engineer had gathered a stalk to show me how he did it, when along came a travelling photographer and asked to photograph us. The Monocle said "Yes, yes," and before the lunch was finished we had two pictures of a comfortable, highly-domestic character presented to us. I have known a good many men in my life—I was married very young, and have had a number of friends, some suitors, and hosts of acquaintances, among the opposite sex—but it just so happens I was never photographed with anyone of them except that strange Swede. How I shook with laughter over that group! I didn't know the man—I didn't know the dog—I didn't drink the wine—and yet it is said that photographs cannot lie!

"What," asked the Monocle, "amuses you so?"

"The unexpected," I said. "The only people who will be more surprised than you and I over this friendly photograph are your wife and my husband!"

I shall never see the Monocle again, nor Carlsruhe, nor the Botanical Gardens, nor the dog—nor do I regret them. And I was advised by the First Lord of the Admiralty, then Reginald M'Kenna, and his family, never to disclose this dark secret of my life for fear of being "misunderstood," whatever that may be. But I must ever have someone to share a secret, so I chose Max Beerbohm, dear Max, who with his risible temperament laughed unrestrainedly, and straightway made a free interpretation of the photograph.

"But, Max," I objected, "you've left out the dog and put in a cupid!"

"Of course I have," he said, "for in spite of your account of the episode, I shall always think of that Swede eating his heart out in the long future, across the seas and the years." But that was only a pretty compliment from Max.

"And really and truly," said Mr Labouchere, who can never quite get over the old-fashioned idea of "gallantry" to women, "was there never a moment of sentiment?"

"No," I said, "never—I am a modern woman, and there was my sense of humour, the baby, his four new teeth, and my grown-up son between us. We were only ships that pass in the broad daylight. Maybe some day I'll come up against a Dreadnought, but it wasn't that day anyhow."

Convention is death to spontaneity. I never repent any action of mine which has been natural, but have many regrets for lost opportunities of amiable human impulse.

One year in Brighton a tall, interesting, solitary woman dressed in mourning, accompanied by a white greyhound and a blue-tongued chow, continually sat near me on the lawns, listening to the music. The chow unbent and became friendly, and the greyhound treated me as a relative, but the sad-eyed mistress I never got to know. Afterwards it came to my knowledge that she was an American with a tragic history—then indeed I was sorry not to have given her an unconventional word and shake of the hand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE MEMBER FOR SCOTLAND DIVISION AND THE UNCROWNED KING

WHEN the next General Election occurred, Mr Parnell decided that the numerous Irish in Scotland Division, Liverpool, were entitled to their own representation in Parliament, and T. P. was selected to contest the seat. He stood as well for his old constituency in Galway to ensure his membership in Parliament, in case the election went against him in Liverpool.

Mr Parnell, T. P. Gill, T. P. O'Connor, and myself, occupied one common sitting-room—at least, I occupied it, as they were all busy and absent, organizing meetings and speaking at various places. One day I bought three bunches of violets and presented each gentleman with a flower for his button-hole. T. P. and Mr Gill threw theirs aside when faded, but Mr Parnell paid me the compliment of wearing his a week. He had to women the manner of a man who liked them. It was quite different from his manner to men, much more kind, gracious, and solicitous. They all seemed to take the result of T. P.'s election for granted, and one evening at dinner Mr Gill asked Mr Parnell whom he should put up at Galway in T. P.'s place. There was a dead silence at the table, and Mr Parnell answered not one word, but I saw a sort of red glint in his eye, his mouth shut like a death trap, and I said to myself, "It will be O'Shea."

I lay no claim to being a politician, and am generally quite without intuition, but on this occasion it came to me forcefully, and when we went upstairs I mentioned my suspicion to T. P., who said it was impossible. Nevertheless, I was right, as subsequent events proved.

What an enormous amount of character, and courage, it must take to be asked a direct question, and to answer it by a direct silence. I have only seen it done on that unforgettable occasion, but I have been told Mr Parnell never hesitated to take this course whenever the question was an embarrassing one.

The night of the result of the Election of Scotland Division was declared, T. P. was hard at work speaking in a doubtful district, so I drove in the carriage with Mr Parnell and sat with him on the platform. He had given me some violets to wear, and added a little bunch of shamrock that some one had sent him from Ireland. The large hall was packed with a breathless, enthusiastic audience, and Mr Parnell was as pale as death. Men kept coming and going on the platform. Some short speeches were made. A man came in and said softly to Mr Parnell that a goodly number of votes had been given for T. P.'s opponent, enough to cause anxiety. There was a pause—my heart was beating to suffocation. Mr Parnell came over and told me not to be anxious. A few confident people applauded; then hurried feet outside, a man bearing later news and greatly excited, rushed on to the platform, and whispered to Mr Parnell, announcing T. P.'s success. Mr Parnell reared up his head like an emperor, got on his feet, his face paler than before, his hands clasped behind his back so tightly they were bloodless, and stepping to the front of the platform, he announced that T. P. O'Connor had been elected by fifteen hundred majority. The vast crowd rose to their feet and answered with deafening cheers. Women waved their handkerchiefs, men shouted themselves hoarse. My ready tears came. Never have I witnessed a scene of wilder enthusiasm—the Irish had wrested a seat from the Saxon.

The doors were closed, and then Mr Parnell made a speech. You could have heard a pin drop, the tension was so great—and he finished with these words: "We will knock at England's door gently; and if she refuses to hear, we will knock again more loudly; then if she still remains deaf we will knock with a mailed hand." With this he raised his

hand as if to strike a blow. The effect was electrical. If he had added, "We will knock now," I am sure the whole of that audience would have followed him and gladly died fighting for they knew not what, but imbued by the desperation of his soul. That is what made him a great leader. He inspired other men, even the timid, with his flaming spirit. I never saw a braver man than Mr Parnell. And Texas is a country that breeds brave men, and I know courage when I see it. Alas, a time came when his courage availed him nothing. The history of his downfall is one of the most pathetic in history. There is a rumour that Captain O'Shea said to Gambetta, "What are we going to do with Parnell? He is getting to be a great danger in the country." And Gambetta replied, "Set a woman on his track." And the woman, instead of betraying him, fell in love with this patriot, and that was his undoing. He was the only man who held the Irish party together for fifteen years, and he had every quality to do it. In the first place he was mysterious, and that appealed to the Irish imagination. He was self-contained, and before announcing them to his party, he made his decisions. He was self-reliant enough to take all responsibility on his own shoulders. He could fight for every inch of ground with his adversary, guided by unsurpassed wariness. A member of Parliament, with a world-wide reputation in the early days of Home Rule, had a sort of promissory paper entrusted to him by Mr Gladstone, merely to be read to Mr Parnell and afterwards it was to be returned to Mr Gladstone. Mr Parnell, desiring to see some particular phrase, held the paper for a moment, then quietly folded it and placed it in his pocket. The member stretched out his hand and said, "Oh, but I'm under a bond to return that to Mr Gladstone." "No," said Mr Parnell very gently, "oh no, it's safer in my pocket," and in his pocket it remained. Mr Gladstone was greatly disturbed when he heard the result of the interview and fiercely blamed the intermediary, who said, "Well *you* get it back—I can't." And Mr Parnell remained master of the situation and possessor of the document. He had infinite patience and could always

bide his time. And he had a thorough knowledge of the Irish character, and the advantage himself of possessing some of the sterner qualities of his fighting American ancestors. His mother's father, Admiral Stewart, was known as "Old Ironsides," and in a way Mr Parnell was very American. He could be as silent and as watchful as a Red Indian. He had perfect faith in himself; he stood alone; and he had the superabundant energy of the American, that fierce energy that finally drove him to his death. In one fatal particular, however, he resembled his countrymen. Every Irishman has a henchman whose business it is to report all that he hears, and to invent the rest. Mr Parnell had more than one specimen of this particularly mischievous and abominable type busily employed in constantly betraying his followers and stirring up strife not only between himself and them, but between the Irish members themselves. There is but one thing in my now somewhat long life of which I am thoroughly proud. I have never in the whole course of it repeated a disagreeable thing that one human being has said to me of another. I have said disagreeable, and I dare say even cruel, things myself, but always off my own bat, and never under cover of some one whose confidence I have betrayed. My strongest temptation to lie is to make peace, for "one doth not know how much an ill word may empoison liking." If every one had preserved a hard and fast rule never to hear or to repeat disagreeable things, what a difference it would make in the whole history of the world! And the informer is always the betrayer afterwards. This rule is unalterable. Mr Parnell's most dangerous henchmen were men of no importance, of narrow intellect, and of small outlook, and yet they were able to set the ball rolling which was eventually to temporarily divide and ruin the Irish party and to delay Home Rule for a decade.

If I were a great orator or a great preacher I would by eloquence and argument make the world look with horror upon the creatures who stir up strife in families, between friends, and—worst of all—given the opportunity, between nations. The futile argument advanced is, "You should

know your enemies," and if you do, what then? You can only hate them back, and make bad worse. Whereas, by innocently treating an enemy as a friend you may unexpectedly win him as one. The truth is, the person who brings a disagreeable story that hurts and wounds, dislikes you. The desire to see you suffer proves that. Tale-bearers are weak, and the weak are rarely frank—they have not enough courage to make their dislike manifest. They can do it only through other and more subtle means. How often sensible people are taken in by the mischief-maker whose pretence of friendship enables him to give a lifelong festering wound.

Like all great leaders, Mr Parnell was inordinately selfish. When he put Captain O'Shea up for T. P.'s seat I was visiting in the North of Ireland, but I somehow felt he would get T. P. to go with him to Galway, and that it was asking far too great a sacrifice, as T. P. had represented the town and was both trusted and beloved there. He of all the members should not have been asked by Mr Parnell to support O'Shea. And I wrote to T. P. imploring him not to go to Galway. But it was in vain, and the fact that he did go made a grave quarrel between us, but whatever Mr Parnell demanded of his followers he got, no matter how difficult the command. He subordinated everything and every man to himself. He was without doubt the "Uncrowned King," but Galway was his "Ides of March."

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE BIRTH OF "THE STAR"

I HAD gone to Ramsgate to stay with the Laboucheres, and Mrs Labouchere and I were walking on the sands, when she said to me, "Bessie, is T. P. always going to be as poor as he is now?"

I said, "I hope not. I think he would make a very good editor," and that night we talked it over with Mr Labouchere; he agreed with me, and when T. P. came down at the end of the week the idea of "The Star" was born. A prominent politician and a remarkable judge of men wrote to me while I was lately staying in Florence with the Laboucheres, "I should love to see Labby again. He and I were always good friends in the House of Commons. He should have been in the Cabinet. I fancy his remarkable sense of humour was a bit against him—the fools mistake it for insincerity, whereas there were few more honest and sincere men than our witty friend. When one plays cards with a man, sits in the House of Commons with him, or is in business with him, he cannot for long conceal his defects. Of course I write only of the political game. No one ever found Labby for one moment false to his professions, and his word was implicitly trusted, although his jokes I'm afraid did the party little good. The Nonconformist is totally devoid of humour, but is, *au fond*, a good creature and must be considered."

Every one believed in the judgment of Mr Labouchere; he had a very practical mind, and from the beginning he predicted the success of the paper. It was a psychological moment, there was room for it. He thought T. P. an always-to-be-depended-upon journalist, never dull in his

writing, continually interesting, and indeed with a touch of genius.

Mr Labouchere was very encouraging, helpful and active in getting the capital together, and T. P., full of blithe energy, worked night and day, seeing capitalists, politicians, artists who brought advertising designs—the man with torch aloft was his own idea—engaging his staff. Mr Massingham, that brilliant journalist, was his chief leader-writer, Ernest Parke was the sub-editor, George Bernard Shaw was the Musical Critic—and many other men, then unknown, but now famous in the world of journalism, were contributors.

But even after some of the machinery was bought there was a moment of fear that the whole plan of "The Star" would miscarry. Mr Carnegie offered to provide Lord Morley with sufficient capital to start an evening paper in support of the Liberals. "The Star" was to be a Radical paper. I was staying in Brighton, to be near the Laboucheres, who were at Lyon Mansion. T. P. came down from London much depressed, and said as Home Rule was to come to Ireland through the Liberals, and John Morley with an evening paper could be of such service to the party, he thought he had better drop "The Star." I simply raged.

"Good heavens!" I said, "you can't do it. Here you are compromised to all your staff—I never heard of such a quixotic idea in my life—of course you must go on with the paper."

He said, "Don't say anything about this to anybody."

I looked at the clock. "In fifteen minutes," I said, "Mr Labouchere shall know all about it." And off I rushed to Lyon Mansion to find him a mine of strength and support; he helped to write a wire to Mr Morley for T. P. to sign, who soon made his appearance, and with my bullying and Mr Labouchere's logic a boy was sent off with the telegram. I followed him in the hall and gave him a shilling to run.

Mr Morley abandoned the idea of his paper, and "The Star" went triumphantly on its way. So great was T. P.'s enthusiasm that he said he must be on the premises both day and night. He could not edit the paper otherwise. So a flat was built for us at the top of "The Star" building.

He also, to lessen the time given to dressing in the morning, designed a time-saving costume. It was to be a flannel-lined coat buttoned to the chin, the trousers also flannel-lined and with socks and slippers; he calculated not more than two minutes for clothing himself. My suggestion was to do away with socks and trousers, and in their stead flannel-lined top-boots reaching well up over the knee, and a very long, braided sort of garberdine, thus reducing his dressing to half a minute. He said I always threw cold water on all his valuable ideas, and neither of the costumes after this was adopted.

Finally, the first day arrived for the publication of the paper. I went down rather early. The machines were going, nice new carts standing outside, newsboys were waiting in groups. T. P. was in his editorial room, proof was going up and down the stairs, and finally a batch of papers were ready, and the first newsboy found his voice and called out "Star, Evening Star" and rushed down the street followed by other boys shouting and waving the new paper. A lump came in my throat, and I ran upstairs to congratulate T. P.

Before night the success of the paper was ensured. I drove to Grosvenor Gardens to dine with the Laboucheres and tell them all about it. Mr Labouchere had advised about the contract, which practically made T. P. a life editor, and at last I thought that with his splendid talent he had come into his own. What a happy, happy night it was, in spite of the prospect of, like poor Jo, my moving on again.

Although I had not been long in my little house on the embankment, it was a grief to leave it. The river was full of interest and charm to me, and it was my first home, after being so many years without one. But I moved to "The Star" the day after the paper started. And really the next two years could not have been more uncomfortable. The building was not very solidly built, and the machinery shook it like an aspen leaf. The hangings, curtains and all my clothes reeked of printers' ink, the noise of the carts coming and going, the call of the drivers, the quarrelling of

newsboys, and the incessant grinding of machinery, made a perfect pandemonium of noise. A huge market was just opposite, and the odour of stale food was continually coming in at the windows. The one delightful thing about it was an excellent bathroom with a generous tub and a fine shower-bath, which had been put in expressly for T. P. Before we left Grosvenor Road he had been speaking somewhere in the country, and at the house of his host had taken a cold shower-bath. When he came home he said at last he had found the thing that would cure his every ill—a shower-bath—and he wanted one put in at once in Grosvenor Road. I demurred to the expense, and also suggested that he sometimes changed his mind—perhaps after he got the shower-bath he wouldn't like it. He said he never changed his mind—never; that I always discouraged him in every effort he made to regain his health (what a splendid robust invalid he was!); that evidently I didn't care for a shower-bath myself, and that was the reason I didn't want it. So when the architect who was designing "The Star" flat came to me with the plans, I at once put my finger on the bathroom and said, "Whatever you can or cannot do in this flat, give us a vigorous shower-bath—the largest one manufactured."

One morning about nine o'clock I asked the maid where Mr O'Connor was. She said in his bedroom, in bed—that he was suffering from a chill. When I went in, he was wrapped in blankets and had a hot-water bottle clasped in his arms. The chill was the result of the shower-bath, without which only a short time before he could not exist. He said there was something the matter with his circulation for the moment, but he would be better in a day or so. Twice after he tried the shower-bath, with the same result, and then it was left to my undisturbed possession. There is nothing in the world I like better. That cold, invigorating spray kept me alive during those two trying years spent in Stonecutter Street.

One night in particular I remember. T. P. was speaking in Scotland, where I was to join him the next day, and I was alone on my floor, the servants all up above, when, about

half-past two or three o'clock in the morning, I felt the quiver and grind of machinery. I looked at my clock, and was petrified with terror. It was an evening paper—the machines never began before the morning—what could have happened? Had the Queen died? I jumped out of bed, threw on my dressing-gown, and ran barefooted into the hall.

The night-watchman met me, his lantern swinging in his hand, followed by Max.

"What, oh, what has happened?" I gasped out.

"Jack the Ripper," he said, "has murdered two women to-night—not so far away from here either—and we are getting to press as early as anybody."

"Two!" I said. "Horrible! How did he manage that?"

He told me as much as he knew, and I took Max in my room to guard me, and waited for the daylight.

What an impenetrable mystery Jack the Ripper was! The wretch evidently had a sardonic sense of humour, for he used to write to the papers to say a murder would be committed the next night, and sign his letters "The Ripper"—and sure enough the murder, in spite of all vigilance, would take place neatly and deftly; and, notwithstanding his grimly humorous letter of warning, no trace would be found. All sorts of theories were advanced, but there was absolutely nothing in any of them.

One night Mr Parnell came to see Mr Labouchere. He was wearing a long rough overcoat with the collar well above his ears, a slouch hat well down over his eyes, and he carried a black bag just the size for instruments. Mr Labouchere accompanied him to the door and said, "Shall I call a cab for you?"

"No," Mr Parnell said, "I will walk."

"Where," said Mr Labouchere, "do you live?"

"Over there," said Mr Parnell, sweeping his arm toward the darkness of the night into which he disappeared.

Mr Labouchere returned to his library and a group of friends, and laughing, said, "I do believe that I've just parted with 'Jack the Ripper'—anyhow Parnell is the only man who answers to the description."

CHAPTER XL

MY FIRE-ESCAPE FLIGHT. BRILLIANT LETTERS FROM GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

THE authorities looking over "The Star" building said it was particularly unsafe in time of fire—that in fifteen minutes the building would be demolished ; and they ordered a fire-escape to be made, one of those long canvas bags which are hooked on to iron loops and swung down into the yard below. You are supposed to get in it and put your arms akimbo, and stretch your legs wide apart, thus filling up the bag and keeping yourself from going down with too great a velocity. It is a sort of calisthenic performance, requiring a good deal of practice, and you begin with one storey only. Another thing breaking the direct downward drop are the two men who, in the yard or street below, hold the bag out, so that it makes a slanting line.

Two firemen and the bag arrived one spring evening about six o'clock. I was to dine out and go on to a party afterwards. The iron loops were screwed in and firmly adjusted in my bedroom window, which was on the fourth story ; the bag was fixed on to the loops, and hung down to the square court below. The firemen, both of whom had been drinking and probably wanting a lark, urged me to go down in it. I hesitated, and sat in the window for some moments (any height makes me rather sick) with my legs dangling down in the bag. They said, " You had better slide down now, and in case of fire you can give Mr O'Connor and the servants confidence by going down ahead of them."

I felt very frightened and nauseated, but I said, " All right, go down and take hold of the bag"—and after I had

dangled a little while longer I suddenly let go, and down I went. But no arms akimbo, and no legs braced against the canvas ! Oh no—I just put my arms up above my head in the frantic hope of grabbing something—anything that would stay my instant death, for that is what it felt like.

However, the agony did not last long. Down I went like an arrow shot from a bow, my skirts up about my head like an umbrella turned the wrong side out. I shot by the men like a catapult from a gun, and slid along the stones in the yard as if they had been greased, leaving large patches of skin on each one that I touched. My right foot turned, spraining the ankle, every hairpin was out of my head, my hair hung down like Meg Merrilees', my elbows had come through my sleeves and my arms were skinned, but I was to my great surprise alive. Every window in the court was filled with a laughing, cheering crowd.

The firemen, quite sobered with fright, picked me up, and smoothed my ruffled feathers, and then I found I couldn't walk. My ankle began to swell at once. I was carried upstairs. I called for a soft cushion to sit on ; Mr Parke came up and cut off my boot ; and we dispatched a telegram to my hostess and my doctor.

T. P. was out. When he came in he could not believe that I had done anything so utterly foolhardy, so absurd, and apparently so courageous. And the unfortunate part was that everybody who had seen the descent resolved there and then to burn up alive rather than go down in a fire-escape.

We had a lunch party when I had sufficiently recovered, and I remember Tim Healy, such a gay, agreeable, and witty friend in those far-off days, looking out of the window and down the fire-escape, and saying he wouldn't for four thousand pounds have taken that hasty journey. As a matter of fact, I was most horribly afraid to do it, but I thought it my duty to be prepared for fire, and above all to set the servants an example with the fire-escape ; but the moments of agony I spent in the awful thing have developed in me an everlasting sympathy for the criminal. On that occasion I suffered all the pain of execution.

One night we went to Spencer House, to an "At Home," and on our return to Stonecutter Street, when T. P. gave the cabman his fare, he got a very frank lecture on the enormity of his ways.

"If," said the man, "I knew your families, I would tell them who you are, bringing me down here to a newspaper office at this time of night, and giving me half-a-crown to do it. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves."

We did not explain that we were married and this was our singular home.

Climbing up and down the four flights of stairs was very tiresome, and another disadvantage was the number of things that were stolen while we lived there. One thing I shall ever regret, a genuine treasure that I had always refused to sell, even in my poorest days: a very beautiful authentic miniature of the Pompadour with powdered hair, dressed with a little wreath of roses, a white pointed bodice, and gossamer lace falling about the square neck. It was painted in the heyday of her beauty, and the face and shoulders were exquisite. It disappeared one day. With so many people running in and out of the flat, to trace it was impossible. Newspaper offices and theatres are alike—things just go.

The musical criticisms of George Bernard Shaw were among the great successes of the paper. They were brilliantly written, full of humour, and always amusing and original—not entirely about music, for he gave himself great latitude, and this was his charm: the unexpected always, even as in his plays of the present day. I delighted in every line that he wrote, and in him personally. He was so witty, gay, and undaunted. He was very poor, and revelled in his poverty as a huge joke. That is why Fate has made him rich. He really didn't care a pin about money. The simplicity of his life called for nothing more than the most moderate stipend. He was the strictest vegetarian. He wore flannel shirts, and the most inexpensive clothes; was active and walked great distances, spending nothing in cab fares; his only beverage was water—and he was perfectly happy, living partly in his land of dreams, and partly in the

world, where nothing escaped his sharp eye—the follies and the motives of mortals were quite open to his penetrating vision. Many people, chiefly unobservant ones, argue that George Bernard Shaw's theoretical creations spring from his brain, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, and possess no attributes of human men and women, but I daresay if the truth were known, he has drawn them chiefly from his own intimates.

There was never a more natural play than "Man and Superman" or a more natural woman than its heroine Ann; and the female of the present day is continually stalking the male all over the world. It is a reversal of nature, but then through so-called civilization we are tending more toward artificiality every day, and it is a long time since Eve offered Adam the apple in the Garden of Eden and then felt ashamed of herself. The only question now among a certain class of women is, "Will he eat, and how soon?" Many women, especially the hypocritical, and those who have played Ann's game, resent the creation; but we all know her. There are Anns belonging to every nationality; they are found in America, France, Germany, England—and I daresay in Asia Minor.

Some years ago I met G. B. S., travelling with a party of artists on the Lake of Como. I asked to be introduced to one of them, saying, I was so much interested in his pictures.

"Not you," said Mr Shaw, his eyes dancing with fun. "He's a mighty good-looking fellow, that's why you want to know him—you neither know nor care anything about his pictures."

I laughed and instantly forgave him—he was so near the truth. I love beauty above everything in nature, in art, in man, or tree, or flower, or child, and the satisfaction of my eye is my chiefest pleasure.

The boat stopped at Como just then, so I never made the gentleman's acquaintance, but it really is not worth the trouble of ever trying to deceive Mr Shaw. By a quick mental process he divines the truth at once. Indeed a great part of his wit lies in presenting the facts of life (in his own

inimitable style) just as they are. Unabashed and unafraid, he exposes truth, no matter how ugly she may appear to be, and tears from her face the falsehood with which we have been veiling it for generations. He knows, nobody better, that in truth lies freedom, and he is working steadily toward that goal, and at the same time adding to the gaiety of nations, for, thank Heaven! his most serious efforts are seasoned with the biting sauce of inexhaustible humour.

These letters, received so long ago in "The Star" days, I kept for their frank and delightful wit. They are as amusing to-day as when they were written.

" 29 FITZROY SQUARE,
17th May, 1888.

" DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—Decidedly the American woman is the woman of the future, but how the American woman contrives to get on with the Irishman of the present, without driving him out of his senses by franknesses which strike me as appalling indiscretion, was the second thought which occurred to me when I met you at 'The Star' sanctum, the first thought being, of course, the realization of the American woman herself personally. It is the Irishman's charm and defect that he never loses his *naïveté* as to woman, he never ventures to think that she is human; and consequently he is eternally chivalrous, which is convenient at times, but which on the whole makes him desperately conventional on the woman question, and inclined to think that her place, after she has seen to his dinner and his buttons, is a glass case, and her chief duty to hold her tongue. I cannot help intrusively surmising that the unfortunate T. P. is having the remnants of this superstition ruthlessly extirpated by the aforesaid American woman of the future. I am enviously sorry for him.

"I admit that it was a fall for Trefusis when he married Agatha, but it was inevitable. They were one another's natural prey from the first, and when two people find that out it ends always in the same way in spite of reason, unless one or other or both is 'Bespoke' before the meeting occurs.

“As to the vegetarian meal, I positively refuse. I have had considerable experience of the danger of associating myself with experiments of that kind. When the victim is a man he forgives me after a time, but women are not so magnanimous; besides, your suggestion—the most extraordinary ever made by woman—that the reformed diet might have the effect of assimilating your personal appearance to mine, chills me to the soul. Imagine your becoming fair, not to say green! No, thank you! If all the women were made fair to-morrow I should retire to a monastery the day after. The fact is these bean-pies and so on are not the proper things to eat, though they are better than cow. The correct thing is good bread and good fruit and nothing else. At present it is impossible to get either except at odd times.

“It is superfluous to recommend M.’s ‘Confessions’ to me; I have heard them from his own lips. I doubt if there is any other such man in the world as he. I cannot describe him; he would baffle even T. P.’s descriptive talent, and I accept your phrase as the final felicity of criticism on him.

“My book-writing days are over, unluckily; for the last five years I have had to live and lecture at my own expense, and I should not know how to write a novel now if I wanted to. At the present moment, by the by, I should be writing notes for the mossy-headed Massingham. How I should like to get hold of that paper just for a fortnight!

“G. B. S.

“I beg your pardon, I have such a habit of signing that way, that I forget and do it when better manners are needed. Pray excuse it.”

“29 FITZROY SQUARE, W.,
16th September, 1888.

“DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I take it that you are back from Kreuznach by this time. I too am back—from Bath—upon which expedition (I was three hours and a half there) I spent a fortnight’s hard work and a pound in present cash, only to be maligned and misrepresented in ‘The Star’ and to

return in a state of destitution with my Italian Exhibition project faded into an impossible dream. No, madam. Share the splendour of West Kensington with the giddy Massingham if you will, and leave to sterner, grimmer uses the slave of the world's destiny and of his own genius.

" I walked home from my lecture at Dalston last night to save a tram fare—think of that and blush ! Probably I shall walk home from the New Cut to-night for the same reason. Last month I earned £6, 12s. The month's rent is £5. I have another paper to prepare for October 5th, equal in difficulty to the Bath one, and equally paid in the gratitude of posterity. I have two books commissioned, payment by royalty after they are published—and you talk of the Italian Exhibition ! Ha, ha ! Do you know what the Italian Exhibition costs ? Our tickets, third class, including admission, half-a-crown if they would cost a penny. One programme between us, a penny. The Blue Grotto, threepence (for you—I should wait outside as I have seen the imposture already) ; sixpenny seats at the Coliseum—one shilling ; threepenny seats at the Mandolinists—sixpence ; shilling seats at the Marionettes—two shillings ; Switchback Railway, one turn—sixpence. Refreshments, say fourpence, as we could be scrupulously economical. Loss of time, reckoned at ' Star ' rates of payment—half-a-crown apiece. Total, twelve shillings and twopence ! So that even if I borrowed ten shillings from you to start with (which an Army Reserve man in the S. D. Federation tells me is the cheapest plan of managing an affair of this sort) I should still be two shillings and twopence out of pocket. Two shillings and twopence to gratify the whim of a giddy young woman who proposes (monstrous conceit) to take my education in hand ! My education ! You a baby, still looking with wide-open, delighted eyes at the glitter of West European whitewash and advising maids, wives, and widows with the artless wisdom of an incomparable and unique *naïveté*—*educate me* ! Stupendous project ! No, I learn from everybody, and what I learn I teach, but I am nobody's pupil, though I should be glad indeed to meet my master. You will find

very few people in London who know anything, but those who do have learnt it all from me ! All of which is as much as to say that for the present I am tied, neck and heels, to stump and inkpot, and mustn't introduce the statue to its original yet awhile.

"Meanwhile, I hope you are well, as this leaves me at present—thank God ! (if there were one) for it. This is the Irish formula, and faultless in its way.

"I judge by a fervour in the leading article that the editor of 'The Star' is again at his post. Convey to him such kind regards as can pass between two hardened worldlings.

"Of the enclosed¹ I very grievously suspect Master Tighe Hopkins—but you began it.

"G. B. S."

¹ "The enclosed" was a brilliant article by Tighe Hopkins, suggested by a paragraph in 'For Maids, Wives, and Widows' my weekly column in 'The Star.'"

CHAPTER XLI

A "STAR" PARTY. THE SHIRT OF CHARLES I., AND NORWAY

WHEN I returned from Scotland to "The Star" building—it never could be called home—I met Adele Steiner in Edinburgh and brought her back with me as a consolation. She was a very pretty, thoughtful, intellectual, charming girl from Texas, who had been spending a year or two abroad in foreign travel, and her stay with me was a delight. She is now the wife of the Hon. Albert Burleson, the able leader in Congress of the able democratic party from Texas, and her thoughtfulness and tact have been of inestimable service to her husband.

We were soon busy preparing for a reception in "The Star" building. The editorial department was furbished up as a series of dressing-rooms, and as all the rooms in the flat opened into each other and some of them had folding-doors, it was easy to make sufficient space to accommodate many guests. Various friends with country places sent big baskets of flowers and foliage. Lady Ripon from Studley Royal was particularly generous, and Lady Milbanke sent from Yorkshire not only flowers enough to decorate the entire dining-room, but a special bunch of pink and white carnations—my favourite flower—for my own personal decoration.

The four flights of stairs were covered in red felt. An awning was provided for the door, and we looked very gay and festive on the night of the party. The various papers were kind in their mention of it, but I have only this extract left :—

"Mrs T. P. O'Connor, a charming American, was 'At Home' on Wednesday evening at 'The Star' Office, an immense building which also serves Mr and Mrs O'Connor as a residence.

"It was a novel experience, I should imagine, to nineteen out of every twenty guests to be sumptuously entertained in a newspaper office, and for myself, I never remember anything like it except the great party given to inaugurate the new 'Daily Telegraph' buildings six or seven years ago.

"Luckily 'The Star' 'At Home' was on that evening of the week when most of us can manage to steal a few hours of the night without going into sackcloth and ashes next morning, and the result was that some 500 accepted Mrs O'Connor's invitation. The 'At Home' was a kind of christening of the Radical paper, which in five months has obtained a circulation unprecedented in the history of journalism in England. Everybody was there, Politicians, Artists, Actors and Actresses, Professional Beauties, pretty young ladies just coming out, and a large sprinkling of Society celebrities, and what is more, everybody enjoyed himself or herself.

"Clever Mrs O'Connor had turned the rooms in which she and her husband live, above the working part of the paper, into a perfect fairyland, ablaze with lights and flowers. There was Irish hospitality and some excellent Washington punch, and the result was that all went merry as marriage bells.

"Towards the middle of the evening there was a diversion in the shape of the printing of the last edition of the paper the ladies going down to the machine-room and setting the Marinoni and Fosters going with their own fair hands.

"There was Mr Gladstone talking to Mr John Morley. Mr Beerbohm Tree surrounded by a circle of admirers. Oscar Wilde and his pretty young wife. Sir Charles Russell. And representing the Opposition Bench were Sir Lyon Playfair and Mr James Stansfeld, and I noticed Mr G. B. Shaw and Lord Ashburnham, Sir Frederick and Lady Milbanke, and Mrs Labouchere in white satin, old lace, and a parure of

diamonds, had a smile and a cheery word for every one of her numerous friends.

"A great many people who had dropped in for a few minutes only and intended to hie them away to other functions, changed their mind when they found what good entertainment was in store for them and stayed at "The Star" Office.

"The party was altogether a brilliant success."

M. Johannes Wolff played divinely at "The Star" party. He could not speak a word of English at that time, and I offered jestingly to give him lessons. He took it seriously and arrived the next day with grammar, dictionary, and a little book of stories. I gave him one lesson, Adele Steiner gave him the next, and T. P. gave him two. This was his entire course in English, though now he speaks the language very well. The lessons were interrupted by a short visit to Lord Ashburnham's and never resumed. Ashburnham Place is one of the lovely spots of England. The house is old, and the garden is sheltered and has a great variety of trees and shrubs brought from milder climates and thriving well in the soil, which all about Hastings is more or less productive. The white grapes are magnificent, and there is okra also growing under glass, a very delicious vegetable brought from Egypt, and, like the pomegranate, Cleopatra ate of it, for okra is a historic vegetable and was, I have no doubt, a favourite with the Ptolemies. It is the principal ingredient of gumbo, the famous dish of New Orleans.

There was no house party, only Adele and I, Lord Ashburnham and, later on, T. P. The first evening of our arrival Adele came down to dinner looking like a very youthful Marquise. She was dressed in pink satin brocaded in silver lilies, with her hair powdered and bound by a silver ribbon. I said, "Why all this magnificence?" And she bowed toward Lord Ashburnham and answered, "In honour of the distinguished host and the distinguished house."

He looked very pleased—it was a pretty compliment, and we three spent such a gay evening together. I have never seen a more courteous or thoughtful host, or a man with more exquisite manners.

He never passed a gardener without lifting his hat, and his servants have followed his example so closely in the matter of manners, that I wanted to know why the butler had not been sent as Ambassador to St Petersburg. I never had quite such pretty attentions from anybody as that butler. He listened at table to my lightest word. If I said I liked venison it appeared at the next meal. If I said I liked roses I found a bunch on my dressing-table. Some artist had visited at Ashburnham Place and made various sketches while there, and it occurred to the butler, after looking at the pictures, that he could paint too. So he bought himself an easel, and various tubes of colours, and straightway became an artist. There was a certain vista of the garden I loved, and he painted a most creditable little picture of that view, and subsequently sent it to me, accompanied by a ham from Lord Ashburnham.

There was so much of interest in the house. The magnificent library which had been collected by the father of Lord Ashburnham was then intact; among the books was a fine Mazarin Bible in perfect condition, and a missal set with uncut gems and illustrated by Raphael. But of far greater interest to me was the shirt worn by Charles I. the day he was beheaded. It was made of very fine linen, with the broad ruffles around the wrists and down the front exquisitely hemstitched, and circling the neck was a faint salmon pink stain. It seems that one of the former Ladies Ashburnham had no regard for the blood of kings, and she ordered a tirewoman to wash the shirt! Fortunately the stain was like the blood-stain of Rizzio in Holyrood, too deep to be removed.

All pleasant things come to an end, and one day we found ourselves back in London, and Adele departed for Germany, leaving me to bear the ceaseless restlessness of Stonecutter Street alone.

There was a little interregnum of peace when Walter Ballantine, that kind and thoughtful friend, lent us his maisonette in Victoria Street. Merely to be away from the throb of machinery was bliss. Finally the noise and din of

Stonecutter Street got on T. P.'s nerves as well, and we found a flat in Carlisle Place, and for a time settled there. Then came T. P.'s resignation from "The Star," and that summer we went with Thomas Nelson Page and Johannes Wolff to Norway and spent a delightful few weeks there. It was on our return that Tom Page read us his charming story of "Elsket" which he had begun in Bergen and finished at our house in London.

T. P. has a remarkable concentration of mind, and can study as easily now as at eighteen. Before we started on our trip I came in one day and found a queer-looking man in the drawing-room.

"Who is that man?" I asked.

"My Norwegian teacher, madam," answered T. P., and with a novel, a grammar, and a book of verbs, he soon mastered enough of the language to make us quite comfortable in travelling. He has a quick understanding of the construction of a language, but his ear is defective—the pronunciation is for him always difficult.

At Bergen we drove out to see the Griegs, whom I knew, but they had gone away, and so we missed them. They had a little place near the town, and they lived very simply. Their quiet happiness came from within, and surely their marriage was made in heaven, for no two people were ever more contented together, or more congenial. They looked exactly alike, both having wide open, childlike, heavenly blue eyes, short, curly, grey hair, and both were small and thin. They dressed alike in grey tweed, and when they went out wore overcoats and little round caps made apparently by the same tailor.

Mrs Grieg was a fine pianiste, and I have heard them play spirited duets together, and he never found such an interpreter of his beautiful gay, sad, characteristic songs as she. When he came to London, and his wife was just recovering from a life and death operation, a well-known singer was engaged for one of Grieg's concerts, and sang once, but he telegraphed Mrs Grieg to come if possible. She did, and sang like a nightingale. Her voice even at that time was as

fresh as that of a girl of seventeen—joyous, melodious and musical.

They were very young when first engaged to be married, and both taught music and were hopelessly poor, and the engagement lasted years—fifteen or seventeen—before he made enough money to buy a little home; but they were always happy in each other and consequently quite independent of other people.

We all have different ideas of happiness. One woman desires social success above all else. Another wishes to become a great singer; another a great actress; another longs to have been born a great beauty; but my idea of satisfying happiness is that of a close, congenial, unbreakable companionship, such as Grieg and his wife had. It gives that peace which passeth all understanding—the peace of the mind and the heart. It stills restlessness, and makes the sharpest pain bearable. And, alas, this companionship is given to so few of us! To me it began and ended with my father.

When Grieg's music became popular, he was offered concert engagements all over Europe, but he never wanted money. His wife, his home and his piano, made him completely happy.

M. Johannes Wolff was a special favourite with the great composer. He thought no artist could play Grieg's Sonata with such expression and feeling, and Johannes Wolff loved Norway, which was also a claim upon Grieg's affection. The Norwegians are a very proud race—even the humblest are self-respecting and independent. When we were all travelling in the little stohlkerries, each alone with the driver, Johannes Wolff complained to his of the slowness of his horse, whereupon the man said he would go home—though it was only our second day out—and home he went, proudly refusing a penny for his services. This taught me a lesson, and every little while, when my driver said, "Good 'orse, good 'orse," I, looking at his sturdy steed, enthusiastically agreed.

CHAPTER XLII

A FRAGRANT PRECIPICE

STALHEIM is the most beautiful place in Norway, with the hotel looking down a purple gorge of mountains, and a fragrant precipice was just at the side of my bedroom window—it must have contained all sorts of strongly perfumed flowers to scent the air so adorably. And I remember Stalheim for another reason as well : it was there T. P. and Tom Page elected to demonstrate the fact that men are only grown-up boys. As the hotel was overflowing, they occupied the same room, and each had retired to his separate little bed, when Tom Page, who did all the last things at night, said, “ T. P., you open the window to-night, and hang up your wet stockings to dry, and blow out the candle,” but T. P. firmly declined any of the offices, and the candle was still lighted on the table between them when I went in the room later for some medicine. “ Why,” I said, “ has the candle been left burning ? ”

“ Because,” Tom Page grumbled, “ T. P. was too darned lazy to blow it out. After this we must all strike against waiting on him.” To restore harmony, I opened the window, hung up the stockings, and blew out the light, but unless I had gone in the room, the candle would have burned to its socket, a torch of contention between a celebrated author and a celebrated journalist.

In Christiania I found Grieg’s world-renowned Wedding March converted into a picture : it represents a midsummer’s day, in a dark green forest. The tall pine trees rearing their heads to the blue sky, the hot bright sunlight slanting through and down upon a rushing stream, over which the wedding

party are crossing. The bride is in white and on a white horse, and wears a silver crown which the sun turns to pale gold.

The bridegroom is in green, rich in ancestral ornaments, and the wedding guests are clad in the gay and picturesque peasant costumes of the country. It is a happy rendering of love, and youth, and colour, and coolness, and greenness, by an artist of much poetical feeling, and was inspired by Grieg's fairy-like, characteristic music. I stood long enough before it to make it mine, and I have only to shut my eyes to see it again.

At our hotel in Christiania every evening about six o'clock we had a visitor with whom I longed to speak—Ibsen. He came in the reading-room at this hour, settled himself in a certain chair, and read the English, German and French newspapers. He resembled strongly a retired American farmer, with his white beard under and around his face like a ruffle, his thick grey, wiry, upstanding hair, and his small, inquisitive, very bright eyes. He was always dressed in black, with a black necktie and a soft black hat, and no one ever spoke to him, or he to anyone. I longed to tell him what a debt of gratitude all women owed him for writing "A Doll's House," that great play which is one of the most powerful pleas for the emancipation of woman. It is a tragic, unanswerable argument that they should occupy the position of comrade and friend, instead of child or plaything. Nora understood the art of flattering her husband's vanity by appealing to him as a pretty playful baby. She, indeed, for a time, and through his attitude, believed in his superiority, but when the final test came she was the stronger of the two. It was her husband's latent cowardice and her latent strength which the comedy she was playing laid bare and converted into a tragedy.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE LOST LEADER

“ Blot out his name then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footprint untrod,
One more devil's triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God.”

BROWNING

THERE is no woman, even the most unthinking, who has read or heard Nora's words that can ever forget them, when in answer to her husband's assertion that as a man he cannot sacrifice his honour for her, Nora says : “ That is what hundreds and thousands of women have done, and are still doing every day.”

It is the false position which women occupy, the necessity of subordinating an intelligence oftentimes better and keener than that of man, simply on account of sex, which makes so many of the heart-breaking tragedies of the world. “ I'm a man and I ought to know,” is a phrase which accounts for a number of the shipwrecks which might have been avoided if the captain had not steered the ship alone.

Quite a different man from Ibsen was Bjornsterne Bjornson. I saw him walking along one very hot afternoon, clothed entirely, like Mark Twain, in pure white heavy serge. The only spots of colour were his blue, blue eyes, and a blue pansy pinned on his coat. He was a strikingly handsome man of the real Viking type, very tall and strong looking, with glittering hair, and eyes and a rolling gait like a sailor. He, too, had advanced ideas for women, but his genius was of a more delicate order and much less ruthless than Ibsen's. His studies and pictures of Norwegian life give a most vivid impression of the country ; they are so

definite, so full of vigour and virility, and he makes the rush of the water and the clearness of the air an actuality.

In the autumn of that year we went to America. It was necessary to raise funds for the Irish Party, and Mr Parnell sent for this purpose T. P. O'Connor, William O'Brien and John Dillon—if there were other members, I have forgotten. The possibility of a divorce between Mrs O'Shea and her husband had been spoken of, but Mr Parnell was strong in his assurance that it would not take place, and even if it did it would make no difference to him or his position. The first meetings were overwhelmingly enthusiastic, and the money came rolling in, like a tidal wave. Bishops, and priests, and governors, and mayors, sat on the platforms and made speeches. Theatres were not large enough to hold the audiences, and opera houses were brought into requisition.

At that time every one in America believed in Home Rule ; the party was undivided, working in unity and held together by an iron hand. Parnell was looked upon as more astute than Gladstone, and quite as great a party leader. The very air was full of success. Irish and Americans alike put their hands in their pockets to contribute to the funds, and many of the Irish chambermaids gave each a solitary dollar.

Then came the news of the divorce, and the tide turned. The Nonconformist conscience is by no means unknown in America, and also many American men are grim and self-controlled. They had no particle of sympathy for a man who could ruin his own position and that of his party through Love. There were columns upon columns in all the American newspapers, and the Irish members were besieged by reporters, who never left them, night or day. I remember washing my hands and dressing my hair one evening with three in the room. T. P. was extremely tactful and patient with them. And at every cable, or tiny morsel of news, they made a fresh rush, trying to thumbscrew some small opinion out of somebody. One night, on the arrival of a certain cable, they woke Mr Dillon and T. P. up at three o'clock in the morning. It was always the same question : " Have you anything to say, Mr O'Connor, on the state of affairs now ? "

The answer was invariably, "No, boys, I haven't." Then the "boys" would invent what it seemed to them should have been said, and we would pass on to the next day.

Mrs William O'Brien was held up to me as a model of discretion. She never even looked in the direction of a reporter, while I occasionally did smile at some good-looking lad, who bade me good morning, and I was strictly commanded to hold my tongue, and on no account to be interviewed. I slipped away to Washington for a few days, and missing my friends at the station, as they lived in the country, I was obliged to go to the Arlington Hotel for the night. No sooner had I sat down to supper than a young man appeared.

"Is this Mrs O'Connor?"

"It is," I answered cordially, thinking, with my bad memory for faces, he was a forgotten friend.

"I am a reporter from the——"

"Don't," I said, "please don't interview me. T. P. is in mortal terror of my saying something I ought not to say. You see I am disturbingly frank, and I've got no political opinions except that I'm a democrat from Texas, and anyhow I'm not the interesting one of the family. If you will leave me out I'll tell you all I know about T. P. Where shall we begin?"

The next morning there was an awful column headed: "Mrs T. P. says what she ought not. The frankest woman in America."

Luckily there really was nothing compromising in the interview, but the Irish Party breathed a sigh of relief when they heard I had retired to the country.

On my return to New York things were *in statu quo*—that is, the Irish members were holding little committee meetings from morning until night, but could not decide whether or not to stand by Parnell.

I am in no sense of the word, as I have said before, a politician, but I wanted dreadfully, from the dramatic and spectacular point of view, that the Irish Party should to a man stand by Parnell. In vain T. P. explained the Noncen-

formist conscience to me. I said, "They ought to stand by him like a solid phalanx of Roman soldiers, and go down to history united. It would be splendid, unexpected and intimidating. The English count on their being disunited. They will at last fear the Irish if they rise or fall together."

I was an enthusiastic, blind, unconquerable Parnellite in those days, and I thought, and think now, the division of the party was a mistake. Once having been made, it was not a matter of any consequence who became an anti-Parnellite or a Parnellite. It was wiser to join the majority—the one and only thing was complete unity.

One day the committee meeting lasted so long in the Hoffman House that I finally went to look for T. P. I knocked at the door. There was a silence, so I went in. Sheets of scribbled paper, parts of memoranda, and manifestoes were scattered about. One of them blown from the table to a chair caught my eye—it, too, was unfinished. I picked it up, and brought it away with me, feeling that it was Parnell's doom. How splendidly it reads :

" HOFFMAN HOUSE,
" NEW YORK.

" We stand firmly and unitedly by the man who has brought the Irish people through unparalleled difficulties and dangers from servitude and despair to the very threshold of emancipation, with a genius, courage and devotion unequalled in our history—not only in gratitude for these imperishable services in the past, but in the profound conviction that now more than ever Parnell's leadership is the chief assurance of the triumph of the Irish cause. We shall follow that leadership loyally and unflinchingly——"

It was never finished or signed, and the reading even to-day is as sad as death. How history might have been altered if it had been finished and valiantly upheld! Mr Parnell would not have died of a broken, desperate heart. Irishmen would have proved themselves a united body of men of steady nerve, incapable of intimidation, and, in spite

of Mr Gladstone's manifesto, Home Rule would have been nearer at hand than now.

“ And I think, in the lives of most women and men,
There's a moment when all would go smooth and even,
If only the dead could find out when
To come back, and be forgiven.”

The Uncrowned King has been forgiven—the wild cheers that enthusiastically burst forth at the magic word “ Parnell ” at all Irish meetings show this. But—he will never come back. He was ill and doomed, when at one of his last meetings, hoping to arouse the old enthusiasm, he himself called out hoarsely, “ Cheers for the Chief ! Cheers for the Chief ! ” That proud, silent, self-contained soul, to beg of the public for cheers ! His spirit was broken, the end was near. A great leader of men was dying.

“ Whatever he to others was
He was finer far than anyone that I have known beneath the sun,
Sinner, saint, or pharisee——”

CHAPTER XLIV

AN OLD-WORLD HOUSE IN CHELSEA

ON my return from New York, after the Parnell débâcle, we moved into a charming old-fashioned house in Upper Cheyne Row, just around the corner from Carlyle's historic old house (which has now been turned into a museum) in Cheyne Row. The people who lived in Oakley Lodge before us had been tenants for thirty years, and were broken-hearted at leaving it. I can well understand, for it was unlike other houses and had a character and an individuality of its own.

There were two friendly drawing-rooms downstairs with low ceilings, and a pretty dining-room, and above that T. P.'s study, and a number of bedrooms, but the great charm of the place was the long garden with the old sundial in the centre and a number of fine old trees.

I grew to love every inch of the place, and I shall, I hope and know, now that it is forever gone, never care so much for any house again.

My friends found it pleasant to come and see me in the summer, for a long balcony ran at the back of the house, and here tea was served, and every one used to say that it was like the country, so quiet, green, and peaceful. Every Friday found me at home, and no one ever stood on ceremony with me or waited for me to return their visits.

Many of my American friends found their way in the pleasant spring days to the house at Chelsea. Mrs Louise Chandler Moulton came every Friday. She is dead now, so it doesn't matter if her pretty romantic story, already known to her friends, is put into print. Philip Burke Marston, the



A RARE OCCASION
T. P. AT HOME



blind poet, fell in love with her voice, when she was no longer in the first freshness of her youth, and she always used to say that she did not mind his being blind, because he would never see her grow old ; but he never grew old himself, and he loved her to the end of his life, and she his memory, to the end of hers. She was an appreciative friend, and what affectionate letters she always wrote. This one enclosed a little paragraph which she had sent to a Boston paper :

“ 17 LANGHAM STREET,
“ *August 24th.*

“ MY DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I had felt a little blue and lonely to-night, and I said to myself when the postman knocked, ‘ I do wish something pleasant would come ’—and so it did, in the shape of your letter. Thank you for the charming exaggeration of your paragraph. You make me out all that I would like to be.

“ I am so sorry to hear you are ill. You are too bright and sweet for fate to give you any suffering. I hear you praised when I go to Mrs Perkins to try on my gowns, and a dress-maker is always a judge of character.

“ I sent off the poems to my publisher to-day—thank Heaven ; now I shall have a little more leisure. I am going, September 3rd, to make a brief visit to Lady W——, about two hours from London, and then I shall go either to Scotland or Paris, I am not sure which. Next time we are in London at the same time I hope I shall have the good fortune to see much of you.

“ I met the Pages at the Hendersons’, and they promised to come and see me last Tuesday, but they were faithless and didn’t. I was sorry, because I liked them much.

“ I send my sheet full of good and affectionate wishes, and a paragraph which I clip from a Boston paper, and I am very much yours,

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON ”

This was the paragraph :—

“ Americans are numerous in London just now. At a little

breakfast, given yesterday by Mrs T. P. O'Connor, I met Thomas Nelson Page, whose work has long been my delight, and he is himself quite as interesting as his own books. Harold Frederic was there also, clever and brilliant, as became the author of 'Seth's Brother's Wife,' and several more Americans besides—to say nothing of Mrs O'Connor, who is an American herself, though she has been the last sixteen or seventeen years in London. I have fallen in love with Mrs O'Connor—young, beautiful, witty, gracious, and graceful, one is glad to have America thus represented in London Society. When she talked I wanted to hear her talk for ever, and when she accompanied on her grand piano the divine playing of Johannes Wolff on his violin, the enchantment of music completed the spell which enthralled me.

"Oscar Wilde was at this pleasant breakfast, and fairly scintillated with wit. The host was talking to a radiant blonde, and Oscar Wilde asked Mrs T. P. if she wasn't jealous? She said 'No—T. P. doesn't know a pretty woman when he sees one.' Harold Frederic said, 'I beg leave to differ—what about yourself?' Mrs T. P. answered, 'Oh, I was an accident.' 'Rather,' said Oscar Wilde, 'a catastrophe!'"

Lord Glenesk during the heat of the season would sometimes come and spend nearly a whole day on my little balcony. He was never the same, poor man, after the death of his son, and I remember driving out to Hampstead immediately after this little note reached me :

" 139 PICCADILLY, W.

" 22nd August 1904.

" DEAREST RIVAL AND SWEET SUPPLIANT,—I will tell the *M.P.* to do what it can for you, but do spare me and my blushes and ask me not to appear as a photograph with a phender under my pheet or in my arms.

" My poor son has been three months in bed, and is so delicate that even the half-hour's journey to Hampstead quite upset him. However, he is better to-day and I trust the air up there will set him right. You may imagine what anxiety we have had.

“ Please come and see him when you can. He would like it.—Sincerely yours,
GLENESK ”

When Frankfort Moore first lived in London he often dropped in on Friday. Although his novels, many of them, are immensely entertaining, T. P. thought he ought to return to Journalism, and something was said to Lord Glenesk, who was then Sir Algernon Borthwick, on the question of Frankfort Moore, and he wrote me :

“ AIRDRIE LODGE, KEW GARDENS,
“ *February 26th, 1895.*

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—How good of you ! How good of Mr O’Connor to mention my name to Sir Algernon Borthwick. I had no idea of returning to Journalism, my books have lately been doing so extremely well, but so splendid a post as Sir Algernon has at his disposal would be a temptation. I have written to Sir Algernon, but I do not know in what terms I should write to you. Whether I get the thing or not, my gratitude to you will be the same. It was so singular that I should find your kind letter awaiting me on my return from town, where I spent some profitable minutes negotiating with a dealer for an ivory crucifix for you. You may remember, that when I was in your bedroom (doesn’t this look like a bit from a novel by the author who shocks people) I promised to get you a crucifix possessing some artistic merit. I did not forget that vow. I have been looking about me ever since, but without success until to-day. If I can bring the Hebrew who owns it to reason to-morrow, I shall call with it as near four o’clock as possible, but on no account wait in to receive it, if I am fortunate enough to get it.

“ Thank you again and again.—Yours sincerely,
“ FRANKFORT MOORE ”

I don’t know if he brought the Hebrew to reason, but he got the crucifix, one of the most beautiful I ever saw. After

hanging over my bed for so many years it now lies packed away in a box waiting for me to have a home once more.

Grant Allen was an occasional visitor. I used always to say of him, that if I was a rich woman I would give him a salary of £2000 a year to take a walk with me every day. He was so full of information, and had such a very lucid way of imparting it. Only to-day I looked at a book which he sent me with the little inscription of which he speaks :

“ THE CROFT,
“ HINDHEAD, HASLEMERE,
“ *Thursday.*

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—It was a great pleasure to meet you again the other night at Dr Bird’s.

“ I am sending you my book. You will see a little sketch there of American Duchesses. I have taken the liberty of dedicating it to one of them.

“ Please thank your husband most sincerely for his generous review of ‘ The Woman who Did.’ It is the kindest, honestest, and truest notice the book has yet received. What I particularly value is the fact that while differing fundamentally from the social and ethical theories of the book, he yet shows himself just to them and to it. I have had so much unfair treatment in other quarters that I know how to value this frank and fearless criticism.

“ With kindest regards to you both.—Yours very cordially,
“ GRANT ALLEN ”

CHAPTER XLV

FROM MY LETTER BOOK

IN spite of my really sincere friendship for the Baroness Burdett Coutts, I saw her only too rarely, but sometimes she used to drive to Chelsea, and she was always cordial, sympathetic and unforgetful, and if I was going away she sometimes sent me a little note of farewell :

“ STRATTON STREET,
“ *Thursday.*

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I very much regret to learn by your note that you have been so ill and are now obliged to go to Germany in order to recruit your strength. Both Mr Burdett Coutts and myself unite in wishing that you will return quite yourself again, and we should have been very glad to have come to you to-day and offered you our best wishes for a fine journey and warm weather, if there be such a thing in this chilled world. Unluckily, however, we cannot visit you to-day with your other friends, for my husband leaves London to-morrow and is overburdened with business, and I have a meeting of ladies at my house this afternoon interested in the Great Northern Central Hospital just building.

“ I am very sorry that I must say good-bye, and in the best sense God speed you.

“ I send these roses for your journey.—Believe me, Ever
sincerely yours, BURDETT COUTTS ”

It was at Oakley Lodge that I read “ The Lost Leader ” to Max Hecht and received such enthusiastic encouragement from him. He possessed a great deal of sentiment and

understood what I was trying to convey in the play. My poor play, that has never been produced and very likely never will be. But I had faith in it then, and I have faith in it still, on account of the subject, with which history provided me, and because of the absolute honesty with which I have dealt with the subject. I have endeavoured to put into the play the relentlessness of Fate toward all the tragedies of love that go on between a woman who is married and a man who is unmarried, who have the misfortune to love each other with sincerity. I believe that irregular relations can exist between a man and a woman, and they may truly love each other, and even respect each other, but the greater the love and the greater the respect, the more terrible the tragedy becomes. It is the natural province of man to protect the woman he loves, and it is the natural province of woman to seek this protection, but protection is impossible except from a husband to a wife. Gladys says to the O'Donoghue :

“ Oh, do you understand me so little ? I am miserable and unhappy with you—without you I could not eat, nor sleep, nor live. Marriage is said so often to be a failure, but I long for its surety and its ease. It is ten thousand times harder for a woman and man in our situation to love and be just to each other. Bitterness must creep in. The world is against us. Society is against us. Law and order are against us, and, worse than all, our own conscience is against us. If I belonged to the highest and noblest type of woman I would go away from you. But—I love you so.”

The world is always against those who break her very wisely ordained laws, and of course the highest type of man and of woman control themselves and never in spite of suffering make these sordid tragedies, and I have tried to convey in my play of “ The Lost Leader ” the inevitable end which must result from a tragic, wrongly placed love.

Mr Hecht tried to get Forbes Robertson to do it, and then he wrote to Mrs Campbell about it and enclosed me this note from her. But nothing came of it and I have almost given up hope of seeing it done.

“ 33 KENSINGTON SQUARE, W.

“ DEAR MR HECHT,—I have always admired Mrs O'Connor's Play—Mr Robertson knows that—and I have tried for many months to convince him it was worth doing. I thought a provincial trial production would have been best.
—Yours Sincerely, S. P. CAMPBELL ”

Another friend who came not often enough to Oakley Lodge was Anstey Guthrie, that most delightful, modest humourist and playwright. Can I ever forget the keen pleasure “ The Man from Blankley's ” gave me, even to the big red chrysanthemums on the wall-paper in the first scene ?

I remember one quickly arranged dinner on Sunday in the little house, when I was fortunate enough to get Anstey on the very shortest notice, and he wrote me :

“ 16 DUKE STREET MANSIONS,

“ GROSVENOR SQUARE, W.

“ 18th March 1893.

“ DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—I shall be delighted to dine with you to-morrow, Sunday, at 7.30.

“ I am pained that you should suspect me of making light of ball fringe and mantel frills and turquoise blue pots. Do you really think I have *no* reverence ? I am having my rooms done up this Easter, and they are to be all ball fringe—even my dog will be re-covered in Waring-Gillow muslin and have a mantel frill around his tail, and he won't eat out of anything but an art pot as it is. There is nothing Philistine about *us*.—Sincerely yours, F. ANSTEY ”

I remember the very first time that I ever met Anstey. It was mid-winter, and we were both going down to stay for a few days in the country at Lady Jeune's. I got into the train at Euston ; Sir Henry Thompson, whom I did not know at that time, was in a compartment alone when I, a solitary female, entered. He examined me suspiciously, and reached

for his bag preparatory to changing into another carriage, but I saved him the trouble by saying : " Pray don't get out : you will not be travelling with me alone : my husband will be here in a few moments." I wished him particularly to stay as he was taking down the most adorable bull puppy to Lady Jeune, a blue-eyed, brindled angel, and I wanted to make his acquaintance. Sir Henry gave his brother to Ada Rehan, and I used often to see him in her dressing-room when she played in London. I wonder if she has him now ? But the blue-eyed, brindled angel grew up and developed a perfectly maniacal hatred of horses. After biting one or two cab horses severely in London, and giving Lady Jeune a big bill of damages to pay, he was sent down in the country where he lamed an inoffensive pony, and finally, I believe, was given away.

After we had spent a few days in the country together, Anstey Guthrie and myself became fast friends, and I have always been grateful to him for making me like him as much as I do his delightful humorous books ! How many times I have sent " A Fallen Idol " and " Vice Versâ " to friends sailing for America. " The Pariah " in quite a different and more serious vein is an exceedingly fine novel.

Paul Blouet (Max O'Rell) I knew very well. What a wit he was, and what an inimitable speaker. I do not think I ever heard anything so finished, and so exquisite, as his after-dinner speeches, and he always had something pretty to say both in conversation and in letters :

" MIDLAND HOTEL, BRADFORD,

" *Nov. 20th, 1900.*

" DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—Your kind note was here awaiting me when I arrived from Manchester. I shall not be in London, if my health permit me to work, before December 20th. We could only have that chat through the long distance telephone, and until Edison has given to us his new improved telephone which will enable us to *see* the people we are talking to, I should not care to use the present ones.—
Sincerely yours,
PAUL BLOUET "

Pett Ridge I also genuinely like. He is one of the humourists who enjoy jokes against themselves. Some years ago I was sitting next to him at a public dinner when the toastmaster came up and asked him : " Mr Pett Ridge, will you speak *now*, or shall we let them enjoy themselves a little longer ? " Pett Ridge was perfectly delighted. I never saw anybody laugh more.

Last year I went to a dinner party given by a friend : Pett Ridge was there. I was a trifle late, and he had proposed a " Pool " to the men of the party on the precise moment at which I would arrive. One man said ten minutes late, another fifteen, somebody else twenty-five, Pett Ridge himself said thirty, and I am ashamed to say won the Pool ; but it happened in this way. My friend had suddenly moved. I had mislaid her address, and when I called up to the Lyceum Club, they would not let me have it. I raged and stormed at the porter through the telephone, but it did no good, and then I told him never to refuse my address to a single human being in the world ! Then I flew into a cab and rushed to Mrs Greenwood's former house. There a nice, gentle, old lady gave me the new address, and that was the reason why I was so late, but of course nobody believed any of my excuses.

Pett Ridge is also an excellent after-dinner speaker, and I should think could give a delightful lecture. He should try his luck in the American field, where they would be sure to like him.

When Eugene Field came over from America he brought me a letter of introduction from a very dear friend, and I was so anxious to meet him, but never did. He wrote me twice :

" MY DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—A bad digestion aggravated by a somewhat severe attack of influenza has prevented me from presenting the letter which I herein send to you.

" Your acquaintance is an honour and a pleasure which I promise myself shall be mine in the near future. I happen to have a favour to ask you, and the righteousness of the cause induces me to believe that you will be glad to grant

the favour. Through the kind offices of friends I have been able to secure one of Mr Gladstone's axes, one of the honest and potent implements with which the Grand Old Man has been wont to work havoc in the forest at Hawarden. It is my purpose to give the axe to the Chicago Newberry Library, as soon as the noble building of that important institution is completed. The relic will create unbounded enthusiasm in our country, for there, quite as sincerely as here, Gladstone is venerated and beloved. Oscar Browning, M.A. of King's College, Cambridge, has given me this epigram upon the subject, and the key of the subjoined translation of the epigram :—

Oceanum transit manibus trita bene securis
Indicium belli nuntia *pacaverit*
Eruat *obscuræ* *victrix* nemora *avia* rixæ
Instaretque novæ fœdus amicitia.

The woodman's axe well worn by Gladstone's hands.
Emblem of war, speaks peace to distant lands
It goes, the bush of dark mistrust to clear
And found a league of love for many a year.

“ I have secured paraphrases in English of the epigram from several well-known writers. Mr [Andrew] Lang sends me two paraphrases. I am looking for some particularly felicitous phrases from John Boyle O'Reilly of the ‘ Boston Pilot.’ Now, will you ask your distinguished husband to graciously favour me with a paraphrase, or, if the Muse be an individual with whom he has no dealings, will you ask him to kindly give me a sentiment suitable for publication with the rest of this literature upon the subject of the enclosed.

“ It seems to me just at this moment that maybe he would like to print in his newspaper an article upon this interesting subject. If this should be the case I shall be most happy to provide him gratuitously, as soon as I have secured all the material I am seeking, with every detail, including versification lines and so forth. This original manuscript will eventually pass with the axe into the possession of the library here

before referred to. I know you will be interested as an American to assist me.—Believe me, dear Mrs O'Connor,
Yours most sincerely, EUGENE FIELD "

" 20 ALFRED PLACE,
" BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON,
" *Jany. 23rd.*"

" DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—Returning to my lodgings at this unholy hour of 10-45 P.M. I found your cordial note, and I am reproaching myself most bitterly that I chanced to be away from home this particular evening. Still, I am a sorry creature for a dinner just at present, and it is perhaps just as well for your good people that I missed my bid to your feast. Mr O'Connor writes me that he too is a dyspeptic. I have been hoping to meet him and to organise with him a Mutual Grievance Society. To-morrow I go to Germany to try a season of the alleged efficacy of Teutonic Spas, and when I return habilitated, you and I must banquet in good old Texas fashion. Although, alas, I fear no such morsel as 'Possum and sweet potatoes' are to be had in this raw cold island. For six months I have been pining for my native dishes, but I could not eat them if I had 'em. However, in the words of the sweet singer of Michigan, 'We may be happy yet, you bet.' And by 'we' I mean, of course, you and Mr O'Connor and all the rest of us, God's very elect.

" On my return from Germany I shall do myself the honour and the pleasure of calling upon you.

" Meanwhile believe me, with every assurance of regret,—
Yours most sincerely, EUGENE FIELD "

" 20 ALFRED PLACE,
" *Feby. 26th.*"

When he came back from Germany he was still suffering, and sailed almost at once for America, and to my great regret I never met this charming poet, and was unable to tell him what exquisite pleasure his tender verses of child-life had given me.

George Street is another man and author for whom I have a very great regard, and I suppose I must have read "The Autobiography of a Boy" at least a dozen times, and I was perfectly horrified not long ago to find out that by an absurd contract he had made so little money out of it. What a delightful literary man he is! Like Max Beerbohm he has the technique of writing at his fingers ends, and has an immense sense of humour and is a perfect encyclopædia about books and literature. "Ghosts of Piccadilly," which I loved, not only for the pictures but for the text, he sent me the winter before last with this little note:

" 64 CURZON STREET, W.,
" February 4th, 1909.

" MY DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—I do not suppose you have seen this immortal work, but if you have you may like to have it for the sake of the pictures.

" I enjoyed myself so much last night—the beautiful little play, and still more the going to it with you three.—Yours ever,
 GEORGE STREET "

The beautiful little play of which he speaks is "Pinkie and the Fairies," and the three were my son and my daughter and myself.

George Moore is another of my friends and an always welcome one, for I know nobody who talks more brilliantly or more wittily than he. I have often urged him to go into Parliament, where, I am sure, his many gifts would be appreciated, and if he scorns Parliament he can become a decorator. His own house in Merrion Square, Dublin, is in the most perfect taste. The front of the house is painted white, and the door a bright green. By some law all the doors in Merrion Square must be painted brown, and the solicitors wrote at once to George Moore to request that this should be done. Whereupon he answered with a most amusing letter, to say that he had made his entire house a symphony in green and white, the hall being white with a green stair carpet, the dining-room white with green carpet and curtains, and

the drawing-room green with white curtains, so that if the solicitors wanted to change the green front door into a brown one, he should insist that they continued the scheme of colour throughout the house. He was quite willing to have a gold and white symphony at their expense but not at his own. I do not know whether the solicitors knew what a symphony was, but at any rate the letter remained unanswered and the door remains green !

When I was playing in Dublin in "The Lady from Texas," I went over one morning and had breakfast with him. At the time he was very enthusiastic about Ireland, which he had recently discovered, and compelled his little nephews, under pain of disinheritance, to study the Celtic language. But he was very dissatisfied with the Irish cooking and Irish chickens. "Look !" he said, as he helped me to the wing of a chicken, "at this skinny blue bird." (Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird" had not been written then.) "In Ireland the chickens are left to pick up a precarious living wherever they can get it. The consequence is, that not even Dublin produces anything but a scrawny and miserable fowl. Now a chicken is an artificial production. It should be fed and considered and cared for until a plump toothsome creature is produced. In future," he said, "I shall send to England for all chickens."

Just before leaving London he wrote me and I went to tea with him and saw his flat, which, even in Victoria Street, he had managed to make quite original and charming.

" 92 VICTORIA STREET, S.W.,
" *Saturday.*

" MY DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—Immediately after I left you I remembered that I had promised Monet to go and see the pictures he is painting at the Savoy Hotel to-morrow, so you see I am going out to lunch after all, and at a more inconvenient time—at twelve o'clock—but this I must do. He is an old friend, and he is alone in London and very much discouraged, so he says.

" You said you would like to come to tea. Nothing would please me more. I love a talk, and you are one of the best talkers. I cannot only talk to you—I can even listen. Do come or ask me to come to you soon.—Always sincerely yours,

" GEORGE MOORE "

One Christmas, Mrs Henniker, who has written many charming stories and a clever play, asked us to spend Christmas at Fryston Hall with Lord Crewe, her brother, and herself. It was a delightful week.

The other guests were Herbert Paul, that very brilliant writer (and by the way why has he not written a political novel, he could do it better than anybody else, and make it remarkably interesting), Mrs Frances Hodgson Burnett, and that perfectly delightful being, Bret Harte. Every morning a little box arrived for him containing a carnation, a rosebud, or a bunch of violets. He loved being well dressed, and often wore a red necktie. He delighted in brilliant colours. He was a charming conversationalist ; his voice was quiet and sweet, he was perfectly natural, very modest and full of humour. He told me that when his last baby was born, the youngest boy, about five, was sitting in the dining-room looking at a picture-book. Bret Harte went in thinking to surprise and please him and said : " Your mother has given you a little brother." The child looked up, greatly disappointed, and said : " I do wish she had asked me, and I would have told her to give me a little donkey."

Bret Harte was not a good walker, but said he would walk with me if I would let him make laps around the house, keeping it in view, as if he got too far away he at once felt tired.

One day while we were lapping our circle, he said : " Now, you are a woman, I want you to explain to me one of the inexplicable actions of your sex. Years ago, when I was a very young man and living in California, a beautiful young lady, who was separated from her husband, in order to eke out her income took a few paying guests—I was one of them.

I at once fell in love with her and we became rather more than friends, and I passed one or two very happy years in her house, when a brother of hers, a clergyman from the East, proposed coming to California for the winter, when suddenly her conscience woke up, and I was told that I must find a home elsewhere. I was going to another town anyhow to edit a small paper, and so we parted on the most affectionate terms, and before we were to meet again her divorce would have ended, and I had every intention of marrying her. That winter I wrote 'The Luck of Roaring Camp,' and she got her divorce and married a millionaire, and became a leader of Society and eminently respectable. One day a friend sent me a magazine, and in it, I think, was the bitterest attack on me and on my story that I have ever read. It simply flayed me alive! It said I was advocating vice instead of virtue, and that every virtuous woman should boycott the story, and not stop there but boycott me. Now a publisher had undertaken to make a small book of 'The Luck of Roaring Camp' and some of my other tales, and it was he who called my attention to this article, and told me that he also knew the author. I thought it was some orthodox, extremely narrow-minded man, probably a Puritan Yankee, so what was my surprise when he told me a lady had written it, naming my former love. He said that at the moment she was in town opening a bazaar, and suggested that I should go down and muzzle her so that she would not again bite me to the bone. I went to the bazaar; she was there, looking like a pure angel, and when I spoke to her she said quite clearly: 'Mr Harte, no self-respecting woman can talk to you after writing "The Luck of Roaring Camp"; I must bid you good day!' I lifted my hat and went out, and never saw her again. Now, you are a woman, pray explain to me her conduct, because I have been puzzling over it for many, many years?"

I said: "It's the simplest thing in the world. She was a wolf so cunningly dressed up in sheep's clothing that everybody in the world thought her a sheep except yourself, and she was very angry and bitter that even one person had

found her out. How she must have enjoyed reading that article to her lammy lambkin of a husband."

That Christmas Lord Crewe gave one of Jane Austen's books to Bret Harte, and within was inscribed this charming little verse :

" Beneath our grey unlovely skies
She wielded once her dainty pen,
With tolerant smile and wistful eyes
Calm critic of the minds of men.

Brave wizard of the brighter west,
Though life be short, yet Art endures,
Shadow or sun we love the best
That Art can give us, hers or yours."

I was much impressed by Mrs Frances Hodgson Burnett's industry. She wrote every morning for two hours and accomplished a great deal of work ; to write for her is as easy, as spontaneous, and as natural, as for other people to talk. And what a very amiable, delightful companion she is. I saw her last winter in New York looking not one day older and, as always, happy and successful.

We came back to London from Lord Crewe's just in time for one of our premier dramatist's first nights. What has become of Pinero's vein of comedy ? (How perfectly delightful his first plays were ! Who will ever forget Mrs John Wood in " Dandy Dick " ?) Of late years Sir Arthur has grown serious and sadly cynical. The " Thunderbolt " impressed me far more than " Iris," and I wrote an appreciation of it and received this word in reply :

" STILLANDS, NORTH CHAPEL,
" SUSSEX.

" MY DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—As a big dramatist once wrote to Bjorn Bjornson, one cannot return thanks for being praised ; but being understood—that makes one inexpressibly grateful.

" Certainly I will read ' The Lost Leader ' play again

when I return to business in the autumn. My recollection is that it had much good in it.

“ With warm regards in which my wife joins.—I am, Yours
always truly,
ARTHUR W. PINERO ”

As a man Sir Arthur Pinero is wonderfully attractive. He is so large minded and kind and tender. Lady Pinero, I am sure, is a very happy woman, for the one thing most conducive to a woman's happiness is tenderness. If her husband gives her that, she can be contented with very little else, but if a husband like Sir Arthur Pinero gives her tenderness and fame and a charming home, she is indeed a blessed woman.

Sir Arthur is not only unique in his genius as a playwright, but he is unique in his genius for neatness. In his study there is not one speck of dust to be found, or one book, or one pen, or one paper out of its place. It is order personified. This shows there are always exceptions to the rule, and that a literary man can be as orderly as a soldier.

Another literary man that I knew who was very neat and methodical was Sir Edwin Arnold. And what a very agreeable man he was. I heard him speak the Japanese language once, and it was pure music. I was a great admirer of his “ Light of Asia,” and he sent me such a charming copy of that work, which some kind friend borrowed and never returned. He told me that on one occasion in America a newspaper reporter had extracted a long interview from him, and just at the end said: “ Now, Sir Edwin, what is your opinion of the American woman ? ” “ An exhaustive subject,” said Sir Edwin, “ but I can dispose of it in one word, Afrin.” “ And what,” said the reporter, “ does that mean ? ” “ It is Turkish,” said Sir Edwin, and means, “ Oh Allah, make many more of them,” and then he ran away.

He used to find his way sometimes to the little house in Chelsea, and this particular Tuesday afternoon I happened to be alone, and he read me himself the greater part of “ The Light of Asia.”

" 45 KENSINGTON PARK GARDENS, W.,

" *July 2nd, 1891.*

" Best thanks, dear and sweet Mrs O'Connor! Most gladly would I accept your pleasant invitation, but have a dinner party myself on Sunday, to which I was going to invite you. I am going afterwards to Fleet Street.

" If you are free, I shall come to you for a cup of tea on Tuesday afternoon.—Yours always most sincerely,

" EDWIN ARNOLD "

We talked of all sorts of subjects and people, and he expressed a great admiration for Sir Frank Carruthers Gould, and said how much he had done for the Liberal Party. An extraordinary thing to me is the way that Sir Frank has absolutely mastered the Negro dialect. He never makes a mistake any more than if he had been born and brought up way down South in Georgia. Indeed, I always associate him in my mind with Uncle Remus, and recently I sent him a little rabbit in a pink coat and blue shoes, with a note in Negro dialect, and he wrote me in answer :

" 3 ENDSLEIGH STREET,

" TAVISTOCK SQUARE, W.C.,

" *13th October 1908.*

" DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—It is monstous good of Sis O'Connor to say Howdy to me in such a delightful way.

" Little Rab of de Blue Shoes shall certainly have house room, and he is now standing watching over a Japanese mouse on a special shelf with the Combat des Trente raging in high relief close by, while above him is a Madonna-faced St George with a pious expression pushing a large silver knife into a sweetly smiling green dragon.

" I am very sorry you are not well—chacun à son gout in this climate, and I am not surprised that Virginia calls you when you ache.

" Uncle Remus ought never to have died seeing that he kept so many of us alive. If I had to pull down all the existing statues in London and put up new ones, I should

begin with Chaucer and all his Canterbury Pilgrims, and then I should start on Uncle Remus's menagerie and the Wonderland creatures. There would be something worth looking at then.

"If you will let me know when you are in London again, I should much like to come and have a chat.—With kindest regards, Believe me, Yours Sincerely,

"CARRUTHERS GOULD"

It fairly warms the cockles of my heart to feel that this great artist loves and understands my countryman as well as I do myself.

I used to see the Duke of Marlborough occasionally at the Laboucheres' when they lived in Queen Anne's Gate: his house was only a few doors away. He was a clever man with a keen mind, and he loved to get up a subject. He knew a great deal about electricity, and could have been an electrical engineer, and he was immensely interested in Science. Very likely even then he had his theories about flying machines. After he married Lily, Duchess of Marlborough, she brought him to see me on one of my Fridays, and he looked around my little Chelsea house and said, "The difference between you and me is this, I can make a pretty house only with taste and money, while you can manage to do it only with taste."

I considered this a very great compliment as he had wonderful taste and ingenuity as well. When he took his house in Carlton House Terrace, the staircase was long and narrow, and he changed the whole appearance of it by having a wrought-iron baluster curved out very much wider at the bottom than at the top. He never minded what trouble he took over decoration. He would find an old piece of brocade and wait months to have it copied on account of the design and colour, and the whole result was beautiful.

A house is a thing to me like a friend. It requires constant personal every-day attention to make it repay you, and love you, but some houses of course are, with the best will in the world, hopeless. When the Laboucheres lived in Grosvenor Gardens, in one of those long up and down characterless

houses, even Mrs Labouchere, with her love of home, and Mr Labouchere, with his mania for building and changing, could do absolutely nothing with it. But when they bought 5 Old Palace Yard from the Duke of Marlborough, it was full of charm and possibilities and eventually became one of the most delightful houses in London. Mrs Labouchere was always an excellent housekeeper, and there was an agreeable atmosphere in their home, as she and her husband have a thoroughly comfortable understanding together, the sort of close understanding which means that if one of them died, the other (I am sure) would soon follow.

Before the Laboucheres lived in Old Palace Yard, various interesting people had owned the house, and a certain lady who was at one time *Châtelaine* there, had very high political aspirations and a desire to be exclusive. Her husband, on the contrary, a Member of Parliament, was most democratic in his tendencies, so there was often a great mixture in their entertainments. One night at dinner John Bright was sitting near his hostess, and she was rather annoyed at having him among her smart guests and thought to give him a direct snub, so she said during a pause in the conversation : " Mr Bright, this rug, I understand, was made by you, and I am very dissatisfied with it. I have only had it a short time, and it is very shabby and badly made."

" Is it ? " said Mr Bright, getting up deliberately from the table and taking a silver candelabrum which he put down upon the floor, and getting on his knees, closely examined the carpet. " You are quite right," he said, blithely getting up, " it is a bad carpet, and I will order my firm to send you another in its place," and then he calmly resumed his political conversation and the dinner went on.

The house in Old Palace Yard has now been bought by the Government and looks deserted, and I never go by it without a pang, and Oakley Lodge is a dream of the past : so to me London is losing its interest. I am not so old, but life's changes have been grievous.

CHAPTER XLVI

A LONG AGO MEMORY OF LISZT

I REMEMBER long ago, at the Lytteltons', seeing Liszt. He was a very calm and beautiful old man, with white hair and the noblest warts I think I ever saw. They gave his face a benign expression. There was some talk of his playing that night, but he didn't. To me he was an object of great interest, as the man who had been a faithful lover for thirty years to the same woman, and had written many hundreds of letters, four hundred being published; and yet the Princess Wittgenstein was not a beauty, nor even soft or feminine, but she was ambitious, courageous and encouraging. It was through her that he composed his "Dante and St Elizabeth," and he always said his best work was due to her. I felt that Liszt was lovable, and it would have been a pleasure to know him better.

My friends I choose entirely to suit myself. It is to their credit if they happen to be Princes, but if they happen to be paupers I can still love and appreciate them.

Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein is one of my friends, and is one's ideal of a Prince; always courteous, always kind, perfectly simple and unassuming, a really grand old gentleman. In many respects he reminds me of Justin M'Carthy; they both have the same gentleness, the same considerateness, and the same power of attracting hearts.

He sent me a photograph of himself, taken in the picturesque dress he wore at the Devonshire Ball. It was a correct copy of one of his ancestors who tried to marry Queen Elizabeth, and it was accompanied by a kind little note, which I must not reproduce. This ancestor, the Duke,

received the Garter from Queen Elizabeth, who flirted with him in some sort of way, and probably gave the Garter as a consolation to his wounded vanity. He married afterwards a Hessian Princess.

We were staying in Bradford, and on leaving, Mrs Byles, that clever woman and silver-tongued orator, gave me a little yellow book to read in the train, saying it was astonishingly clever; the author's name, John Oliver Hobbes, was unknown. I didn't read it immediately—but one day in Chelsea picked it up and was much struck with what seemed to be the author's experience, disillusion, brilliance, cynicism and wit. I begged T. P. to read it, but he declined, so I boldly read a few passages aloud although he was busy with an evening paper. He made no remark except to beg me to be quiet, but later in the evening I saw him become absorbed in the book, and when he made it the book of the week, John Morgan Richards, Mrs Craigie's father, wrote him a letter of thanks, and this was followed by a visit from the authoress herself. I don't know why, but "Some Emotions and a Moral" had conjured up in my mind a vision of pearl-powder, blonde hair, and a lady of forty. What was my surprise to see a girl of twenty-five, with brilliant dark eyes, brown hair, the fresh complexion of youth, a charming personality and gowned quite like one of her own heroines. Dressed all in purple velvet, with a bunch of parma violets fastened to her bodice by a jewelled pin, and with her rich furs, she looked the woman of fashion rather than the budding literary genius. But with all this lavishness of dress, she was really indifferent to it. I saw her later under circumstances which disclosed the real woman. She came on a Friday in June to see me, dressed in an exquisite gown of white chiffon embroidered in silver fleur-de-lys, and Max, my collie, who had a perfect passion for white, sat himself down in front of Mrs Craigie, and after admiring her for many minutes, got up and laid his head in her lap, and his nose made a long wet dark mark on the delicate fabric. She laughed like a happy child and didn't mind a bit. All the agony and mortification was mine, and from that day Max was never allowed to "receive"

with me again. Mrs Craigie liked her pretty costumes only for the pleasure they gave other people. Her mind was a purely intellectual one, and with study, books, and her own thoughts, she was quite independent of the material things of life. But she was wise enough to know the store which the world set upon them and she used them accordingly. And how much she gave the world—brilliant books, good looks, witty conversation, musical ability, and her fascinating, good-humoured, delightful self! No matter how tired she was physically, socially she never flagged.

It is good to die young. But Pearl Craigie's death was a tragedy, for she had not yet done her best work. She had not yet found herself. No living author could have written such telling comedy as she; it was her youth, and her ambition that made her portray the too serious side of life; and it was a mistake, for humourists are not found every day. She was one of the most loyal of friends. I had occasion, while President of the Society of Women Journalists, to take a stand in a matter of some importance, and Pearl wrote me this letter:

“ 56 LANCASTER GATE,
“ *Tuesday.*

“ MY DEAR BESSIE,—I have seen Mrs H. and she explained the *raison d'être* of the Committee meeting to-morrow, and while I like her, I told her that you were my friend, and, without even an explanation from you, which now I have no time to hear, that I would give my entire support to you and would of course vote against her. I will be with you early to-morrow at Gray's Inn. With love,—Yours affectionately,

PEARL MARY TERESA CRAIGIE ”

Mrs Craigie was literally brought up in a house of mirth, for her mother, Mrs John Morgan Richards, is one of the wittiest women in the world. She is an inimitable mimic, her mind is a purely original one, she simply bubbles over with humour and with fun, and beneath this gay exterior her great heart responds to both spiritual and righteous things.

Before the war was declared between the United States and Cuba, and while it was being agitated, Mrs Richards was using every argument against it, and finally she sent this telegram : " Pope, Vatican, Rome. Stop War. Richards." Whether it reached His Eminence or not, I do not know, but I envy her family Mrs Richards.

Pearl said once that her father might as well have married a strong north wind, but after all, where would the health of the world be without a strong north wind ?

At one time Mr Richards was quite ill, and he and his wife went to Switzerland. He was very depressed in spirits, and one morning while talking to his wife about what he needed, she said to him, " John, I will tell you what you need ; you need a good course of elocution lessons, and I will give you one myself now," and thereupon began the most amusing recitation possible. Mr Richards laughed and laughed, and from that moment his recovery began.

When I went to return Mrs Craigie's first visit, I was shown up in the drawing-room by the butler, whose hair was grey in patches (I dare say Mrs Richards' unconventional humour had had something to do with it), and seated at the end of the very long drawing-room was a lady busily writing, who did not turn at once as I came in. The butler announced : " Mrs O'Connor ! " She went on writing and said, " Mrs who ? " The butler said : " Mrs O'Connor " ; she continued to write. Then the butler said : " Mrs T. P. O'Connor ! " and she said, " What, the woman that has been so good to my Pearl ? " She turned around then, and said, " My dear, come here and kiss me at once," and I did with the greatest pleasure, and from that time we have been understanding friends.

Mrs Craigie had her own beautiful little house that was more like the inside of a jewel-box than anything else, within a stone's throw of Steephill Castle, the residence of her father, in the Isle of Wight, but she never went there to live. She would have missed too much the brightness and gaiety and wide-armed hospitality of her father's home. Even in their overwhelming sorrow at her loss these unselfish people con-

trolled their grief for the sake of their friends. Once at least her mother's prayers were answered, for when Pearl was a little girl, and grievously ill, the doctor said nothing could save her and Mrs Richards took her husband by the hand and said : " Come into the other room, John, and pray, pray : we will pray together." And that night the child was out of danger.

On the whole, I cannot imagine a happier life than Mrs Craigie's. She was always surrounded by people who loved her, people who were considerate of her, and she had health, and good looks, and great success, a devoted son, and troops of friends, and she deserved them each and every one. And she died before sadness or old age had touched her.

CHAPTER XLVII

MY DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO A GROUP OF AUTHORS

ANOTHER novelist has appeared on the horizon, who I prophesy will make quick success—Mr A. S. Hutchinson. His sense of humour is delicious, irrepressible, and spontaneous. I read his first book, "Once aboard the Lugger," while suffering from a bout of insomnia, certainly the most discouraging influence possible for both the author and myself. And even toward the grey hours of the dawn, I was gurgling with laughter, and one little bit of philosophy took hold of my memory and remained in it.

"A sleepy maid in Mr City Merchant's suburban mansion leaves the dustpan on the stairs after sweeping. That is the little action she has tossed into the sea of life, and the ripples will wreck a boat or two now snug and safe in a cheap and happy home many miles away. Mr City Merchant trips over the dustpan, starts for office fuming with rage, vents his spleen upon Mr City Clerk—dismisses him.

"Mr City Clerk seeks work in vain ; the cheap but happy home he shares with pretty little Mrs City Clerk and plump young Master City Clerk is abandoned for a dingy lodging. Grade by grade the lodging they must seek grows dingier. Now, there is no food. Now, they are getting desperate. Now pneumonia lays erstwhile plump Master City Clerk by the heels and carries him off—consequences, consequences ; that is one boat wrecked. Now Mr City Clerk is growing mad with despair ; Mrs City Clerk is well upon the road that Master City Clerk has followed. Mr City Clerk steals, is caught, is imprisoned—consequences, consequences ; another boat wrecked. Mrs City Clerk does not hold out long,

follows Master City Clerk—consequences, consequences. Three innocent craft smashed up because the housemaid left the dustpan on the stairs.”

And gratitude impelled me to write and thank Mr Hutchinson for the pleasure he had given me, and he answered in characteristic fashion :

“ 53 CROFTDOWN ROAD,
“ HIGHGATE ROAD, N.W.,
“ *December 16th, 1908.*

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I think you are amazingly kind. I think it was so uncommonly good of you to write to me about my book. I have had some very gratifying reviews, but it was part of the writers’ business to write them, and I have had some nice letters from strangers, but those are from admiring folk to whom I suppose the business of writing is a thing apart from their daily lives. But it is a portion of your life and, therefore, I think it was so good of you to take the trouble to notice a stranger engaged in the same business. Additional to this to me are the kind terms in which you write to me, and to me coming from you, I indeed value very highly. I find it difficult to tell you how very much I appreciate your letter and you must believe, I thank you very, very warmly. When the next book is written, I am going to give myself the great pleasure of sending you a copy.

“ This is a very funny life I often think, full of tricks and chances. Two days ago, yours was no more than a well-known name to me. To-day, I am concerned that you suffer from sleeplessness. It is the result of your kind letter, and gives the obvious thought that this would be a nicer world if there were more kindness such as this you have shown me, for it sets up a chain of sympathy. There is a symposium in the current ‘ Review of Reviews ’ on sleep and remedies for insomnia and perhaps you might find a hint or so.

“ I had considerable pleasure in writing my story, but I think it has given me no pleasure so great as this letter from

you. I catch myself thinking of bits and relishing the fact, that perhaps you enjoyed them.

“ Thank you and again thank you.—Yours sincerely,
“ A. S. HUTCHINSON ”

I not only enjoyed “ bits ” but every line of the book, and I have read it twice since the first time and find in it a comforting, sane and joyous outlook upon life. The difference in books upon the mind, is, indeed, as great as the difference in people. It amazed me this summer when we were in the Apennines to find that Mr Labouchere, who is such an omnivorous reader, had never read “ The Golden Age,” that charming, delightful and most satisfying book by dear Kenneth Grahame. Whenever I speak of him in connection with “ The Golden Age ” I am impelled to add dear, from the affection with which he has inspired me. In America he is well known, but his warmest admirer is Theodore Roosevelt. When I told the then President on New Year’s Day that I knew Kenneth Grahame, his face lighted up with enthusiasm and he said, “ Then give him a message from me. Tell him, if he does not come to America and make me a visit at the White House, I shall create an International War.” I wrote Mr Grahame on my return, and he had moved to the country, but he appreciated the warm-hearted message I had brought him from America.

“ MAYFIELD,
“ COOKHAM DENE, BERKSHIRE,
“ 5th August 1908.

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—Thank you very much for your letter and for its enclosure. It was very pleasant to receive the President’s message. Nothing could be kinder than the way he has expressed himself from time to time. He was so very good as to write me a letter some little time ago, inviting me most cordially to the White House, and it was a great grief to me that iron circumstances were too strong.

“ I have disposed of the lease of my Durham Villa house, and this is our only address at present. We could not keep

' Mouse ' in town, and it was a perpetual bother finding him fresh country quarters and bad in principle our being separated so much. He is very happy here though his thoughts still turn to the golden strand at Littlehampton. I took him a row under Quarry Woods the other day, but his highest praise was that it was something like Arundel.

" E. is picking up slightly after her bad peritonitis in the spring. It is beautiful here, and healthy, and high, and invalids are supposed to reconstitute themselves here, as well as anywhere.

" We both rather wanted reconstituting. We have spent two previous summers here, and I knew it well as a little boy.

" I hope you and Mr O'Connor are both keeping fit and well.

" With kindest regards from both of us,—Yours very truly,
" KENNETH GRAHAME "

" Dear ' Mouse ' went to his first Theatre last winter to see ' Pinkie and the Fairies ' and was, I heard, enthralled by the Fairy Queen and her Court."

And there are such a number of writers who have personally endeared themselves to me by their work. Barrie has lovers all over the world. I remember that one of his plays—I think, " Little Mary " with its wonderful tenderness—appealed to me so strongly that I wrote a letter of congratulation and signed myself—Bessie Barrie O'Connor.

And he was quite equal to the occasion when he answered :

" LEINSTER CORNER,

" LANCASTER GATE, W.,

" October 28th, Thursday.

" DEAR MRS BARRIE O'CONNOR,—I think it is a famous good name and thank you very heartily for your letter. I am delighted to hear you like the play.—I am, Yours sincerely,
J. M. O'CONNOR BARRIE "

And for many hours of breathless interest I owe Sir Arthur Conan Doyle a debt of gratitude—and what excellent, exciting plays he has written—I was staying out at Hindhead one year with Mrs Labouchere, and wrote Sir Arthur asking him to come and see me ; in answer he asked us to his charming place. On every height there lies repose, and his house on the top of a hill looked down on a wonderful purple gorge.

“ UNDERSHAW, HINDHEAD,
“ HASLEMERE.

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I should have been delighted to come, but I have several visitors here, and mustn’t disappoint them.

“ Will you come across on Monday afternoon and see my Commando, I think it is rather unique in England.

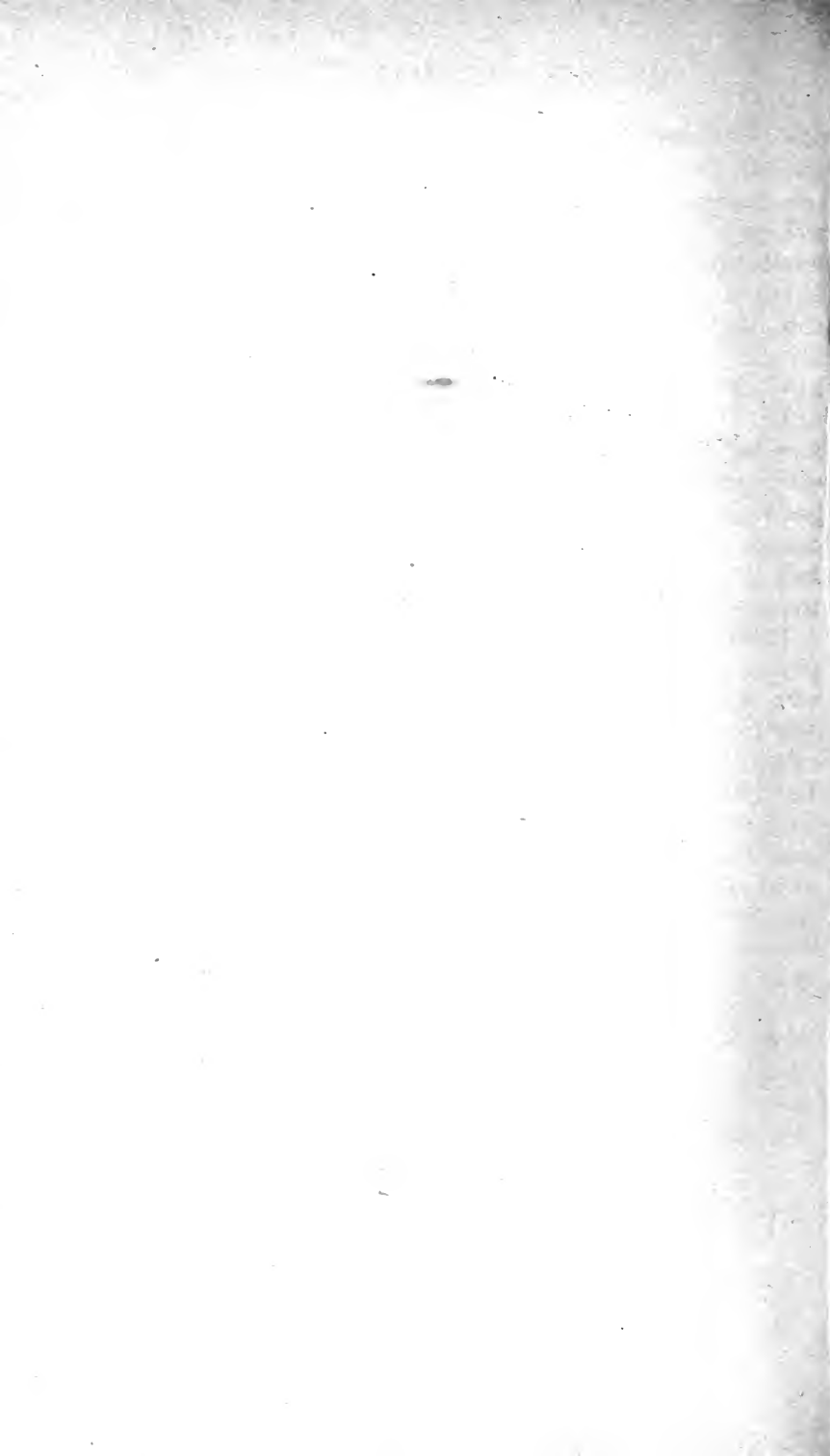
“ With kind regards,—Yours very truly,

“ A. CONAN DOYLE ”

And we went over one afternoon, and I made acquaintance with a great friend, his mighty bull-dog, who examined me critically for a few moments and then licked my face all over, my neck and even behind my ears. Sir Arthur said I was the realization of the dog’s dream : that for years he had been hoping to find a heart leaping to his, and understanding him, and at length he had found it in me. His appearance, forbidding and terrorizing, was the opposite of his big affectionate love-craving heart, and he spent his days in grief because people were afraid of him. I offered him a home, and Sir Arthur said, “ Take care, he may arrive one morning,” but he never did. Perhaps it is just as well, he might not have liked “ Mr Phelan,” my little Yorkshire terrier given me by James D. Phelan of San Francisco, and named for him. A very wise and sweet specimen of his kind, he realizes his own limitations, which some humans never do, and he never attacks other dogs or runs away, for he knows how helplessly small he is. The only fault in his otherwise quite perfect character is his effeminacy. He loves silk cushions and cats. If other dogs are about, in compliment to them he pretends



PIOUS COAXY AT HIS PRAYERS



to be cool and distant to cats, but if alone with a cat he snuggles into the same basket and is quite happy. He has one accomplishment, he can shake hands beautifully and will give first one paw and then the other in the most fascinating manner. And he is wonderfully sympathetic. Lying on my bed one day, he discovered that I was crying, and after licking all the tears off my face he then gave me his paw. And in all his amiable sweet little life Mr Phelan has never done or said an ill-tempered or an unamiable thing. Though once he told a lie. Phelan and I were walking together on the Brighton Downs, when suddenly he gave an ear-piercing scream, and held up a tiny paw in apparently great agony. I thought he had stepped on a thorn, and I carried him a few yards, when a charming toy Pomeranian met us and Phelan leaped out of my arms perfectly cured—the scamp, he was tired and only wanted to be carried.

Phelan's uncle, James Foster (a Grindley wonder), who had nursed me so tenderly in Scotland, was stolen, and Phelan, who belonged to the same family, was given me as a consolation. But he never had either the beauty, or the wit, or the character of James Foster, who gave me his whole heart until I sent him to the Veterinary Surgeon in Edinburgh to have a wart taken off from his side, and ill as I was, he would not speak to me, or notice me for a week. He was even smaller than Mr Phelan, but he had a wonderful personality, and I grieved dreadfully over his loss. What terrible punishments I would give to dog-stealers, for they not only rob your pockets, but they so wound your affections. He was stolen in Chelsea ; while he was walking just in front of the house, a man was seen to pick him up, button his coat about him, and run down Tite Street. And we heard afterwards that he had been shipped to America. My little faithful sick-room friend.

CHAPTER XLVIII

MY STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

“**T**HE Lady from Texas,” produced at Penley’s Theatre, was one of the bitterest disappointments of my life. I wanted success, of course, but money above all things. I haven’t a penny of my own, and absolute dependence is a hurtful position for a proud and sensitive woman. Independence is something I’ve longed for and dreamed of for years. To be able to earn my own living, to eat the bread of my making, has been the goal of my ambition, and to this end no task for me would have been too Herculean ; but Fate, my unkind stepmother, has not only discouraged, but has even denied me work. The play ran only four weeks, and lost money. I believe it might have had a different fate if I had, in the beginning, taken the advice of my friends and played in it myself. Not that Miss Cheatham was not good in the part ; she was excellent, better possibly than I with my inexperience could have been, but there were many and varied reasons why I should have played in it—one being, that we would have first tried it for a few weeks in the provinces, and in this way rubbed off the rough corners, improved it, and presented it in a different aspect to the critics, who, on the whole, were terribly severe on me ; but I bear them not the slightest ill-will, always standing by my craft, and believing and advocating the freedom of the press. When the play was taken off, a young manager offered to take it on tour if I would play the title part. He said that with my name it might go in the provinces. The dresses were new and fresh, the caste was small, and he was sanguine and thought the venture worth while. I was more than doubtful

of my ability to fill the rôle. I am horribly nervous of appearing in public in any capacity, but I could not bear the idea of my poor bantling dying without an effort of resuscitation, and I proposed myself to rehearse on approval, and if I was impossible to retire in favour of an understudy.

I worked with enthusiasm, taking every suggestion, and going over my part again and again, until the Stage Manager thought me possible, and we opened at Leamington. It was a fearful ordeal. When the curtain went up, I stood rooted to the stage, and could scarcely hear myself speak, and I dared not look at the audience ; but gradually a little confidence came back to me, and I struggled through the three acts at any rate without breaking down. Clement Scott kindly came down for the first night, and never was there a more encouraging, uplifting, inspiring friend. The papers were very kind, and the next week we went to Dublin. It was there, on the second or third night of the week, that I suddenly felt happy, at home, and completely at ease on the stage. From that moment, I really loved acting, and lived only for the night. When the notices said that I made "the public forgive Mrs O'Fish Withers for her unconventionalities and even vulgarities, and love her in spite of them," my cup of bliss was full, for I felt the character was understood as I was trying with utter inexperience to convey it. And I worked harder than ever.

After five weeks, we had a week out, and the dresses were all sent to the cleaners, coming back fresh and lovely, and we opened in Edinburgh. I felt really like a sure enough actress when the public applauded me before I said a word, and the papers were quite wonderfully kind. This was on Monday. That night I had a violent chill and very threatening pains, which seemed premonitory of peritonitis. My temperature was well up the next morning, and that night my face was scarlet with fever, but I managed somehow to crawl over to the theatre, to get dressed and to play. I had always heard that a real actress played whether well or ill, and certainly I was ill enough.

The next morning a doctor was called in, and my temperature had gone up to 104, where it remained with varying steadiness for weeks, and one blissful day—for then I lost consciousness—it reached 106. T. P. was telegraphed for and came; we had Sir Halliday Croome in consultation, who pronounced it a well-developed case of peritonitis, with internal hæmorrhage, and left me to the local doctor. This was the last week in October, and I left Edinburgh only the day before New Year. Nine weeks of mortal sickness; but my splendid constitution pulled me through; and stretched in a sleeping berth, and clothed in a flannel dressing-gown, I was able to travel to London on December 31st. T. P., who was busy, could only spare a few weeks from London and had returned there—so the rest of the time I battled with death alone. There is no disease on earth so painful as peritonitis; only one position is possible, lying on the back with the knees drawn up, as to stretch out the legs is unspeakable agony. A pillow is put under the knees to hold them up, but even then, after days carried in this fashion, they ache to drop off. My sweet Scotch nurse used to hold them up for me until I could see her turn pale with fatigue. And the long purgatorial nights of active bodily pain, while the brain acted with superhuman clarity, were more terrible than Dante ever invented in his “Inferno.” Was it not Sydney Smith who said, “The view from the horizontal position is so different from the perpendicular”?—and Heaven knows it is.

And when my fever raged and I could sleep, again and again a dream came to me of a garden in the South.

“There’s not a flower, there’s not a tree,
In this old garden where we sit,
But what some fragrant memory
Is closed and folded up in it.
To-night the dog-rose smells as wild,
As fresh, as when I was a child.”

It was always the same dream, and the same dear garden—just at the gateway a wonderful avenue of tallest cypress trees began, and finished in the feathery cedars of Lebanon.

And at the end of the avenue was a water garden of diamond-shaped and octagonal marble pools, and all around and between them grew oleander trees, weighed down by blooms of deepest pink, and white, and lemon colour, and paler pink, and all the air was bitter sweet with the scent, and there were statues standing here and there, very old, some with blunted features from age and damp, but all of them light and graceful, and there were arbours of rich datura, and the purple wistaria and great beds of phlox, and dahlias, and thick branched lilac trees, and musky honeysuckle growing thickly about the trunks of the olive. And the lilies stood in long, straight rows made whiter by a background of scarlet pomegranates, and hollyhocks and spicy pinks, and purple and white and pink larkspur, and beds of four o'clocks, and scarlet salvia, and sweet william, and crêpe myrtle, and red lilies and cyclamen, all crowded each other, and at the end of the garden a little busy, noisy stream ran, with giant fig-trees growing on its banks, and every once in a while the ripe fruit fell, and made a little splash in the clear water, and the dog-roses and the crimson rambler, and the cloth-of-gold roses all climbed and hid the wall in brilliant sheets of colour, and an old house stood very far back in the garden and the hill sloped down in terraces covered in rich grapes, and olive trees, and the blue, blue of the South sky above it all, and when night came the nightingales sang. And then I awoke to grinding pain and looked out on Calton Hill and the snows of the north.

As the days went by, and I was fairly eaten up by fever, lying hour after hour by myself looking over my whole life past and future, the psychological moment for death seemed to me to have arrived, and I did most earnestly pray God to let me die. I am not in the least afraid of the changelessness of death. It is the changefulness of life that fills me with apprehension and despair. To me there are no more comforting words than these :

“ Oh, cool and perfect, peaceful death,
Without one painful sigh or catching in of breath.”

And I felt a whole eternity of sleep would not have been too much to rest my hot and tired heart and restless brain.

But I rarely slept, and with a book propped on my breast, I read day and night, and the effort of getting my mind fixed on my book and away from acute and continual pain was so great, that whole chapters of "Anna Karenina" and "Kim"—oh, that great white road!—and the poems of Burns, are absolutely photographed in my memory, which ordinarily, except in spots, is a sieve. And when I could read no longer, I comforted myself with what odd verses I could remember, whispering them to myself. This comforting plea recurred to me often and often :

It cannot be that this poor life shall end us !
 God's words are truthful and His ways are just.
 He would not here to sin and sorrow send us,
 And then blot out our souls with "dust to dust."
 Saving our clay, and back to nature giving
 Smothering our soul ere it hath had its living,—
 It cannot be !

It cannot be that One so just and perfect
 Would make a perfect universe, and plan
 The star of all should be at last imperfect,
 Life, yet leave that life half-lived in wretched man.
 Forever lives the gross—the dead material—
 Forever dies the life—the spark imper'al ?
 It cannot be !

It cannot be, for life is more than living ;
 It cannot be, for death is more than dream.
 Think ye to clod, God daily life is giving,
 Yet from the grave shut out the grander beam ?
 Night is but day ere it hath had its dawning,
 Death a brief night, and waiteth for the morning,
 Which soon shall be !

CHAPTER XLIX

THE VALLEY OF DEATH

“ Dusk upon the river,
And dusk upon the land—
But oh the sorrow in my heart,
Too deep to understand !

Who of my kin is dead, my heart,
That you should mourn them so ?
Or is it that you died yourself
A thousand years ago ? ”

DA COSTA

MY doctor believed in the old-fashioned method of treating the disease with opium, and I took vast quantities which scarcely eased the pain. T. P. sent me a letter every day, and wrote from time to time articles about me in “ M. A. P.” He said :

“ Finally, I had an opportunity for the first time in my life to see the stage from the inside, and it was a very satisfactory experience. The company of ladies and gentlemen that Mrs O'Connor had around her were like a family rather than a mere chance association of people with no tie but that of business, and this made their travels, labours and experiences singularly agreeable. To Mrs O'Connor they all acted with signal consideration. When she was rehearsing for her first appearance on the stage, there was not one of them that did not put their experience at her disposal, and I am told that the night of her début they all were trembling with nervousness for her. She was indeed the only person fearless and self-confident. When she came through this ordeal triumphantly they acclaimed her with all that readiness

of kind emotion which is the characteristic of their profession—a profession which brings out the good and the simple and the sympathetic in human nature, as well, of course, as its rivalries and hatred. They all—I may say, perhaps, who shouldn't—were profoundly attached to the authoress of the play—as indeed is everybody who comes to know her sweet, gentle and beautiful nature."

On my lonely bed of pain to read these paragraphs from T. P.'s ever facile pen gave me food for reflection and a feeling of deepest sadness. It is the woman with "the sweet and the gentle nature" who is generally called upon for life's supremest sacrifice—renunciation; while the passionate woman of ardent temperament, selfish and *exigeante*, gets and keeps what is best in life.

My friends wrote constantly, and my room was literally a bower of flowers arriving every day from London, but the slow days dragged on like links in a convict's chain. And towards the middle of December, I felt myself growing gradually weaker, and hour by hour slipping away. Somehow, crossing the dark river, although I don't mind the other side, without a word of farewell to anybody at the very brink, seemed bitter, so the doctor telegraphed to T. P. to come. He was just concluding a business matter of much importance and thought the journey unnecessary, and was a little impatient with me at first. He said, "American women were imaginative, and unnecessarily nervous; that he found me really looking better than he expected; that I should have more courage"—but after his dinner, when he came to say good-night, the burning heat of my hand frightened him, and he sent for the doctor, who said that I was very ill, but he thought I would certainly live until the morning. T. P. came back after speaking to the doctor, and though I begged him not to stay, knowing how sad a sick-room is to him, he insisted upon it, and sat down by my bedside to wait for the morning. I believed I really was going to die, and I felt as gently toward death as though a friend was softly opening the door, and I wondered:

“ If I should die to-night,
E’en hearts estranged would turn once more to me,
Recalling other days remorsefully ;
The eyes that chill me with averted glance
Would look upon me as of yore, perchance,
And soften in the old familiar way
(For who could war with dumb, unconscious clay ?)
So I might rest of all forgiven to-night !

Oh friends, I pray to-night,
Keep not your kisses for my dead, cold brow,
The way is lonely, let me feel them now.
Think gently of me ; I am travel-worn :
My faltering feet are pierced with many a thorn ;
Forgive, O hearts estranged, forgive, I plead !
When dreamless rest is mine, I shall not need
The tenderness for which I long to-night.”

The theatre where I had so hopefully and gaily trotted about the stage was exactly opposite the hotel, and there Dick Whittington and his Cat were disporting themselves, and that night the whole of the chorus were invited by some young men to the hotel to supper in a room very near mine. When the noisy songs began, T. P. went downstairs to the gay company and begged for me, telling them my very life depended on a little sleep—indeed, I might die at any moment during the night. He prayed them to be quiet, but they were, if anything, noisier than before. The proprietor said he could not have his guests interfered with, and I fully expected my soul to depart boisterously to the tune of “ He’s a jolly good fellow.”

At daylight only did the riotous revellers go home. In the morning the doctor came, and again Sir Halliday Croome was called into consultation. He was surprised to find me still in Edinburgh, thinking I had got well and gone back to London. This time he seemed anxious, and said I must be carried to a nursing home at once, and he would himself send an ambulance and two nurses to fetch me as soon as possible.

I was greatly opposed to the move, being quite indifferent

then to everything, but at five o'clock the ambulance arrived, and two nice young nurses came up to take me away. T. P. could not bear to see me in an ambulance—it would have filled him with depression—so I made him go out to visit friends. The two ambulance men picked me up in my nightgown, rolled me in blankets, strapped me on a stretcher, and we began our downward march. My room was in the third storey, and every step gave me pains like knives. A number of people had assembled before the door to see me off. I had been making such a long fight for life that many knew of my illness. The crowd parted silently to let me pass. The nurse threw the blanket over my face, and some pitying soul dropped a little penny bunch of violets on what I thought was my “mattress-grave.” The men shoved the stretcher on a long narrow shelf, and I felt without volition cold weak tears running down my cheeks. The ambulance driver turned to see that I was all right. He had no pocket-handkerchief, poor man, so he doubled up his kindly fist and with it wiped away my tears, saying, “Never mind, Mrs O'Connor dear, I feel it an honour to have carried you downstairs.”

The ruling passion is strong in death, and I wanted dreadfully to say, “Did you see the ‘Lady from Texas’?” but a solid lump in my throat kept me from speaking. The nurses then took their places, and we began our slow march of a mile or more—to me it seemed a great distance. When they lifted me from the ambulance the stars were shining, and as I looked up at them I bade them a silent good-bye. It was many weeks since I had seen them, and I never expected to see them again.

CHAPTER L

THE NURSING HOME

“Blessed are the merciful”

THE nursing home, sweet and clean and cheerful, and full of air, was very different from the hotel. When I was carried upstairs, I gathered from one of the nurses that I was at the very portal of death with the door wide open. The peritonitis had abated, but I was suffering from acute opium poisoning, and from my waist down I was quite paralysed. For weeks I had been dripping with night sweats, that resembled nothing so much as rain; five or six times during the night the nurse had changed my nightgown; and I had become so thin my poor bones were comfortable only on air cushions.

Very drastic remedies were given me—among them doses of belladonna in such quantities that I became quite blind, and it made me so hot and nervous it was with difficulty I restrained myself from wild screams of hysteria. My opium was suddenly left off, and I could have no fluids, or water, only small sips of brandy and soda, and a mouthful of fish or a morsel of toast.

For two nights the angelic night-nurse sat by me dipping her hand in iced water, and then slowly rubbing my forehead; but for this soothing process I could not have remained quietly in bed.

With a complete reversal of my treatment, in ten days I was sitting up and begging to go home. On Christmas Day, T. P. came to have a Christmas dinner with me at the side of my bed, and on December 31st we left for London. The doctor was terribly opposed to my travelling so soon, but I

longed so desperately for my own surroundings and belongings that finally he consented to my going if I promised to lie down all the way, and get into a wheeled chair, and from there to the carriage. Sir Halliday Croome considered my recovery a miracle, and from the moment I got home, I began to mend, and was soon more cheerful—but life has never been quite the same careless affair to me since those many weeks of a horizontal position, when through exceeding pain I faced the great problem of existence, and put out a friendly hand to death, only to have his dark face turn aside, and be sent out to fight the battle of life once more.

Perhaps the prayers said for me in the Convents by innocent children, and by my good friend the Chief Rabbi Adler, may have helped my recovery—at any rate I expect now to reach a quite astonishing age of longevity. When I came back to London, what kind letters awaited me—among them a letter from Justin M'Carthy :

“ ASHLEY DENE.

“ WESTGATE-ON-SEA,

“ *Jan. 8th 1902.*

“ DEAREST BESSIE,—I *must* send you a line to express my heartfelt delight on reading the good news that you are at last able to return to your London home, and that you have borne the journey well. May your complete recovery come soon, to the relief and joy of all who love you.—Ever your affectionate friend,

JUSTIN M'CARTHY

“ Charlotte sends her love.”

What a wonderful recovery Justin M'Carthy made himself after his long and terrible illness in London. It must have been due to the love and the nursing of Charlotte M'Carthy, one of the noblest and most devoted daughters I have ever seen. She was a very witty, agreeable woman, she had lived in London all her life, and had a large circle of appreciative friends, and yet she gave everything up, went to the country to live on account of Justin's health, and was most cheerful and happy in making her father's life hers. I suppose

sacrifice for a woman with the knowledge that she is entirely necessary to the comfort and well-being of some one she loves, always means happiness. Until women are educated not to live entirely through their emotions they must live through the people they love, and it is sad, for they often fail us.

I felt it so kind in Mr (now Sir Henry) Lucy to write me, knowing how busy a man he is, and I kept his letters, written by Mrs Lucy, the kind secretary :

“ WHITE THORN,
“ HYTHE, KENT,
“ *4th January 1902.*

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—We were very glad to hear better news of you. It must have been very hard to have been shut up in Edinburgh, sick and in a strange room, with Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson and other desirable people out of town.

“ I hear you are coming south. If you chance to select Folkestone for a place of convalescence we shall hope to see you here during one of our flying visits in the Parliamentary session. Please do not forget to let us know where you are and how you are when you settle down.

“ The kind secretary joins me in affectionate regards,—
Yours sincerely,

“ HENRY W. LUCY ”

I wonder if I had left Edinburgh as I expected, by the gate of death, after my little much enjoyed triumph there—

“ But none shall triumph a whole life through,
For death is one, and the fates are three.
At the door of life, by the gates of breath,
There are worse things waiting for men than death.”

If I had met Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. I would have tried to speak with Sir Walter first, because I was brought up to love him. The chivalry of the South came from him. Robert Louis Stevenson is a great admiration,

but has never excited the tender affection in me of "the stout blunt carle"—as Sir Walter called himself. There are some people to be loved at first sight. Sir Walter Scott must have been one of them and Robbie Burns another. The literature and history of Scotland have always had a peculiar fascination for the South. Carlyle is another author greatly read, and Whistler, who was typically American, never painted any portrait so fine as that of Carlyle. It is a great piece of work. I saw it first in Edinburgh and it seemed to me, seeing it unexpectedly, to be the living man. And even Sargent, that great artist, has never painted a finer or more characteristic portrait. I do not set myself up to be a critic of art, but some things are very obvious. From the beginning of his career Sargent was a great artist. Mrs Labouchere has a letter from me written twenty-three years ago, begging her to have Mr Labouchere, Dora and herself painted by Sargent. He was always kind. This letter was written to me now a very long time ago :

" I RUE TROUCHET,
" PARIS,
" *April, 1st.*

" DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—I hope you will go to my studio and take your son, although I won't be there to do you the honour, but perhaps you will be so good as to come again when I return.

" The picture of Lady Macbeth is still at the studio until the 15th, when it goes to the New Gallery, and I should like you to see it in the studio as there never is any telling what a picture will look like at an exhibition.

" You really amuse me, by saying that perhaps I will not remember you, and there is a quaint joke on my side, for you taxed me at Parsons' studio with vagueness, and not keeping engagements, and I weakly apologized—my bewilderment. You were thinking of Reinhart, and then I remember the circumstance of several years ago, when you invited Reinhart to call, and enjoyed the comedy of errors enormously. The facts are that I had only seen you once and can draw your

likeness from memory, and that Reinhart and I are one formless and unreliable monster in your recollection, but when I return to London, which will be in May, I will call and try to disentangle myself.—Very truly yours,

“JOHN S. SARGENT”

I wish now I had asked him to paint a portrait of myself if only from memory, but there was no one who particularly wanted it. Now I have an adorable little love in whose long, lashed eyes it would be lovely. He one day told me he wanted a picture of me, and I said, “Oh, no, damma is too old and ugly,” whereupon his eyes flashed and he said, “Damma is *not* ugly, *not a single bit of her is ugly*,”—and I determined then and there always to look my best in those young, beautiful, and starlike eyes. No one who has seen can ever forget them,—even George Meredith was impressed by their singular beauty, and when I wrote to ask if I might buy that wonderful photograph of himself, taken by Hollyer, he wrote me in answer :

“BOX HILL, DORKING,

“April 29th, 1908.

“DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—Here is a Bluebeard’s reply to you. No ! The permission for Hollyer to sell is not to be granted. It might lead to the appearance of a singularly modest man in shop windows between a bishop and a specimen of tarnished silver, having the charm of the metal and its attractive disfigurement. But I will send to Hollyer for copies, and beg you, with your enthusiast, to accept them. Is it fair of a grandmother to give her beautiful eyes to male infants ? Women bearing the darts in their breasts complain of treachery. We will hope that the younger Howard will be conscientious in the use he makes of his grandmother’s gift.”—Most truly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH”

CHAPTER LI

THE LITTLE JOYS OF LIFE

The little joys of life must twinkle like small stars, and illumine the lives of those whose background is one of sorrow.

I AM taking a course of Herbert Spencer, hoping he may give me the peace he has given to so many others. And I try, and succeed very often, to make a joy out of many little things of life. If a friend sends me a bunch of roses, that is a joy. If Helen brings me, as she so often does, a pot of mignonette, that is a joy. If Kathleen O'Moore makes a fairy-like darn on a beloved but elderly blouse, that is a joy. When I visit those twenty-five years married lovers, that is a joy. When my grandson, brave and manly in his four years, comes in my bedroom in the early morning and says patronisingly, "Good mornin', little dam," and kisses me a dozen times, that is more than joy. And how well he knows his power, the scamp. A friend met him not long ago in the park and said to him, "Does your Damma love you?" And he answered, "She woshups me." And indeed I do. For anything more beautiful or alluring or sweet never lived upon this earth than my little love. A year ago, when he was only three years old, we were staying with a friend in Brighton, whose husband is paralysed, and I was advising him to try the Christian Science principles—to say, "I will walk and I can walk," and just walk. He tried the plan, took one or two steps, wavered a little bit, and fell rather heavily. He was describing the fall to Boysey, and he said, "I tried and tried to walk and then it was terrible. I fell!" "Good God," said the baby, "a accident!" And he was so concerned and sympathetic.



"I'M A SOLDIER OF THE KING"

When he was two years old, and just after he had begun to say his prayers, his Nannie said to me, "He is very good now, you know, and says his prayers every night. He is a perfect little diplomatist and always ready to take advantage of every situation." So when I said, "I'll hear his prayers to-night," he said to his Nannie, "Well, if I say my prayers to Damma can I say them with my eyes open?" His nurse said he could, so arranging himself in his crib, with his little hands clasped together and his big, dark eyes wide open, he turned to me and called, "Ready, Damma!" and the prayers began. Some time ago, he asked me what had become of a man who died—a man who was drowned—and I said, "He has gone to heaven." He said, "My heaven?" I said, "I didn't know that you had a private heaven, but he has gone to heaven." He said, "Tell me what it is like." So I began a description of a heaven where there were whole avenues of Christmas trees filled with toys, and cakes, and live parrots that came when they were called, and there were fluffy toy dogs who became real dogs when they were taken off the tree, and angels handed down the toys and played the most delicious music on harps—and altogether the picture struck him as being so delightful that he said, "I want to go to heaven now at once. Do you understand, at once?" I said, "But you have to die first, and you don't want to leave your mother, do you, and your Daddy and Damma?" He said, "But we can all die together, and all go to heaven at once."

His Nannie had him photographed in his Guardsman's uniform, and when I asked him what he thought of the pictures, he said, "I think they are the sweetest soldiers I ever saw." I said, "You know you are an American, and this is an English uniform." He said, "I'm not, I'm a Union Jack, a soldier of the King." And I know one thing, if all the King's soldiers were such loves there would never be any wars.

Last winter among the many games he elected to play with me was one called "Burning Kisses." I had been writing all the morning, and there were a good many torn scraps in

my paper basket, and with every scrap of paper that he threw in the fire and saw burnt up he gave me a kiss—and I am sure they are the purest and the tenderest burning kisses that ever woman in this world has received. Ah, my little love, if all burning kisses were as sweet and innocent as yours, how much easier and happier life would be, how many tragedies avoided ! So life, if we cultivate pleasure in small things, can never be hopeless, but sometimes it is very sad.

CHAPTER LII

SATISFYING SYMPATHY

“He has the Alchemist’s secret who changes one sad note to song ; he has the touch of Midas who makes all bright and golden some one’s day.”—ELBERT HUBBARD

IS there such a thing in life as re-incarnation ? It seems the most plausible theory for sudden and complete sympathy and understanding between people of different age, different nationality, different religion, and very often a completely different point of view.

The first time I saw Helen I saw nothing of her but her eyes ; bright, brown, laughing, foreseeing, inquisitive, speculative, humorous, kind eyes. Doctor Patrick Murphy, her father, is marvellous at diagnosis of the body—this talent has come to his daughter as a diagnosis of the mind. Born and brought up in the East, she has been surrounded by that mystic atmosphere of the Orient which has developed her powers of observation until she is uncanny in reading the mind of every human being who comes near her. She is by far the finest psychologist I have ever seen. The future, by some occult means, is often an open book to her, but her warm and generous heart will always close the page when she knows it will hurt. And what a whole-souled lover of humanity she is ! Spending herself, giving herself, working herself, and continually for other people. She seems to feel that everybody has a right to happiness, and that she must contribute toward that end. Of course, with such unselfishness as a motive power, she is always cheerful and happy. As for me, there is no one of my friends who has been to me in adversity what Helen has been. All

satisfying sympathy between two human beings is a foretaste of heaven. When my spirit faints I fly to her for comfort, and I always get it. She loves to make her affection manifest, and if I look in a shop window and admire anything she never rests until she has given it to me. The greatest or the smallest thing in the world of my desire would be mine if Helen was all-powerful. She is young enough to be my daughter, but, with her mother's heart, has constituted herself my mother, knowing that I need a mother most of all. And how she adores children—old, like myself, and young, like my Love—pretty, ugly, rich, poor, clean, and dirty. Helen's face softens beautifully to them all. One poor, plain, bandy-legged and puny baby she entirely clothes and feeds out of her little pocket money. May she be near me at the last, and may her dear hand hold fast to mine, and beg for grace when my tried and restless spirit wings its flight!

Cardinal Manning once told me that I was in for some millions of years of purgatory more than other people, and when I asked him why, he said, "Because you know how to be good, and you are not good, and those are the people who suffer the most."

I am so thorough in everything that if I once was as good as I know how to be and am not, I should simply die. And Helen is sure to beg to become my proxy in purgatory to work off one or two of my million years. And I think, in remembering all her acts of devotion and her great love for me, her request will be granted. I shall be liberated before my time, and wait, on the other side, until she comes.

I have done some unselfish things in my life—I suppose every woman has been forced to do them, whether she wanted to or not—but I hope the chiefest will be remembered to my credit when the last great day comes—and its being comic, to my mind, does not in the least lessen its merit.

One summer, my son, Francis Howard, Johannes Wolff, a party of friends and myself, went to Oberammergau to the "Passion Play." The construction of my hat was such,

that it was easier to attach my "transformation" to it—which, as a matter of convenience, I was wearing while I was travelling—than to put it on my head; and it was not long after we were all seated that a man sitting behind me—a man with a strange foreign accent—said, "Madam, I cannot see the stage unless you take off your hat." I replied, "I fear it is impossible." "And I have travelled seven thousand miles to see this play," he added. That settled it. I could not bear, after such a journey, to inconvenience him, so I bravely took out my hatpins and deposited hat, hair and all, in my lap. My son, sitting by me, didn't notice at first, but presently he turned round and exclaimed, "What on earth are you showing that noble, intimidating forehead of yours for?" And I said, "On this occasion it happens to be a Christian virtue—I have taken off my hat and hair so the man sitting behind me shall see the 'Passion Play.'" Then on the other side Monsieur Johannes Wolff, whom I had known a great many years, went into paroxysms of laughter over my coiffure, as my hair, in order to wear the transformation comfortably, was drawn quite flat and tight from my forehead, and so that it might seem to be part of the transformation was loosely dressed at the side. I explained to M. Wolff that very few people had seen my forehead; that it was indeed a test of friendship. I wonder if the man who had travelled seven thousand miles appreciated my absolute unselfishness upon this occasion!

The "Passion Play" to me was a great disappointment, and I had wanted all my life to see it—but I was almost sorry that I had, for the Christ of my imagination is a manly man, gentle and tender, but above all courageous, and this character the actor did not portray at all; the meekness made every other trait subservient. It was only the crucifixion that was magnificent, and that awed and touched me to the quick, and impressed me more than anything I have ever seen.

Going from Munich to Baden-Baden that summer I read Dr John Brown's "*Horæ Subsecivæ*," and in the account he gives of one of his father's friends, an old Scotch Pro-

fessor, he records an evidence of an almost miraculous love, which seemed to me unforgettably touching. It was this :

“ His second wife was a woman of great sweetness and delicacy, not only of mind, but, to his sorrow, of constitution. She died after less than a year of singular and unbroken happiness. There was no portrait of her. He resolved there should be one, and, though utterly ignorant of drawing, he determined to do it himself, No one else could have such a perfect image of her in his mind, and he resolved to realise this image. He got the materials for miniature painting, and, I think, eight prepared ivory plates. He then shut himself up from every one, and from everything, for fourteen days, and came out of his room, wasted and feeble, with one of the plates (the others he had used and burnt) on which was a portrait, full of subtle likeness, and drawn and coloured in a way no one could have dreamt of, having had such an artist ; I have seen it, and though I never saw the original, I felt that it must be like, as indeed every one who knew her said it was. I do not, as I said before, know anything more remarkable in the history of human sorrow and resolve.”

I once told this incident to David Murray, and he asked me to write it down and send it to him, which I did, and received from him this reply :

“ HILL HOUSE,
“ LOWER HOLBROOK,
“ 24th January.

“ MY DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—Your very kind letter has come on to me here, and I am indeed delighted to get the actual statement of the fact you related to me. It is still more strange when full details are before me, knowing, as I do, the difficulties of a novice attempting drawing and colouring, and, above all, choosing the miniature and exact portraiture : it is quite wonderful that he could ever produce anything to challenge criticism at all. No doubt whatever it is attributed to the true cause, power of will under pressure of affection, but it had to be a will of a very intelligent man.

I shall treasure the instance and thank you heartily for taking the trouble on my account. My absence on Friday you will see is accounted for by my being here hard at work in bitter cold and wet weather, the most persistent I have ever known. To-day as bad as ever, with an equally bad promise for to-morrow. I shall now be out of town till the 1st November, but on my return I shall do myself the pleasure of calling at once to see you ; meanwhile with my best thanks, believe me, very sincerely yours,

“ DAVID MURRAY ”

CHAPTER LIII

MY HUMAN GARDEN

I THINK there is no one of my friends who has given me more pleasure than Max Beerbohm. In the first instance I was somewhat jealous of him, for he succeeded George Bernard Shaw as dramatic critic on the "Saturday Review," and being a fanatic in my admiration of that brilliant author, it seemed to me that no one could ever worthily succeed him. But the editor displayed great acumen when he replaced Mr Shaw with Max, for he is the one and only man who would have been acceptable to the public. His English is exquisite, his humour is of the most subtle, delicate, and original flavour, and his analysis, not only of plays but of the players themselves, is often like second sight. He sees in a transatlantic comedy, or melodrama, an actor or actress playing a character part and therefore somewhat disguised. Yet straightway when the weekly critique appears in "The Saturday," Max Beerbohm is writing of the inner self, of the man or woman whom he has seen but once in his life. His mind was a delight to me long before I knew him. Somehow we never met until "Madame Delphine," my first attempt at play-writing, was produced at Wyndham's Theatre. It was not a professional, but a social affair, and was a delightful day to me; a sort of material evidence of the affection of many friends, and was, in fact, a gift day. The clerk of the weather presented me with a superb summer day. Sir Charles Wyndham gave me the theatre. My friends, Mrs Cecil Raleigh, Laurence Irving, Lettice Fairfax, Brandon Thomas, and Amy Height, gave me their services. Mrs

Labouchere, my able stage manager, gave me cream and strawberries for my tea, the audience gave me enthusiasm, and I made the first speech of my life, beginning in a very nervous and shaky voice, but gathering courage as I went on, and afterwards got a number of congratulatory letters, but only kept from them all this one :

“ 6 GROSVENOR PLACE, S.W.,

“ *Friday.*

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I must thank you for a very delightful afternoon. Louisiana and the French have always greatly interested me. I know Cable’s story well, and if anything you have rendered ‘ Madame Delphine ’ into a more touching and dramatic incident than the author himself. The play is both charming and pathetic, but that speech ! Oh that speech !! There was never anything like it. When you make another, let me know, and I will travel miles to hear it.—Yours sincerely,

“ HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN ”

And this full, happy day was the first time I saw Max Beerbohm, and in spite of all my emotion I remember quite clearly how he looked, and just where he stood in the theatre. He was waiting for someone, and standing rather back of the people who were shaking hands with Sir Charles and myself. I said to Sir Charles, “ Who is that young man over there with eyes just the colour of the sky ? ”

“ Why, don’t you know,” said Sir Charles, “ that’s Max Beerbohm.”

And from that day we have been friends, such good friends. We have the same point of view about so many things, and so many people. And how we have laughed together, such good understanding laughs—the sort that promote a comfortable intimacy. Barrie knew this in “ What every Woman knows,” when Maggie says, “ Laugh, John, laugh, then you will understand me. Try, oh try to laugh. John, laugh ! ” And he does, whereupon the audience all cry, so closely do comedy and pathos

commingle. And, indeed, it can always be said of the people who know how to laugh, that they know how to cry.

What long walks Max and I, and "The Engineer" have had over the Brighton Downs—"The Engineer," so called by Max, being an agile fox terrier called for his many fascinations Coaxy, with a fine muscular nose, which he uses to tunnel up whole families of pink field mice. With paws, nose, and snorting enthusiasm he ferociously digs and digs, refusing to come when called, and in the dusk of the evening returns home bearing proudly on the top of his broad nose quite a small mountain of earth.

The only disadvantage about Max Beerbohm is, that he is too popular—quite as popular as the young wit described in a story of his own—a man who had ideals, and ideas, and wanted seriously to work, but his witticisms, amiability, and gregariousness all prevented it. He was invited to lunches, dinners, bridge parties, and country houses; in consequence his life was too interrupted to accomplish fame. There was nothing to do but separate himself from the world, and no way of doing it but by a drastic measure. He must disgrace himself. So he selected the worst possible thing he could think of—he cheated at cards. The result: his friends held a solemn conclave and resolved that so witty, delightful, and amusing a companion must be freely forgiven, and instead of being ostracized he was submerged with fresh invitations. They fell upon him like the leaves of Vallombrosa. Fate outwitted him after all. I wonder if Max remembers telling me this story the day I wasn't late just to surprise him.

"48 UPPER BERKELEY STREET, W.,

"*Tuesday.*

"MY DEAR BESSIE,—Saturday then by all means. And I will be waiting you at one o'clock on the doorstep of Jules'.

"I shan't really be there till half-past-one. But I say *One* so that you will arrive not *much* later than——.
Yours affectionately,
MAX "

He was obliged to be very agreeable at this time, for I had just forgiven him for much faithlessness and a little neglect.

“ 48 UPPER BERKELEY STREET, W.

“ MY DEAR BESSIE,—Your charming daughter-in-law has asked me to dine next Friday, to which I look forward with much pleasure (and I have just written and told her so).

“ Meanwhile I hope you won't have it that it is another instance of the “ faithlessness ” of which you are always very unjustly accusing me (who am the most faithful of creatures) that I did not see your play. I had made all my arrangements to go down on Saturday, but these were all bowled over by sudden illness on the Friday and I was in bed till the Sunday, and that was how I missed the pleasure.

“ When is the play going to be done again? Nothing short of ‘ typhoid fever with complications ’ shall prevent me from being at my post.

“ I hear that Graham Robertson's play is in a sense yours. What a nice present. I wish *I* had a play to give you!—
Yours affectionately, MAX BEERBOHM ”

I wrote at once on the strength of this generous offer to say I would accept a book, and have indeed decided on the subject.

There is no one who could do an appreciation of Henry James (that master of style and juggler of language) so marvellously well as Max Beerbohm. He is an absolute master of technique himself, and he loves the completeness and the exquisite finish of Henry James. I do wish I might “ browbeat and bully him ” (as Graham Robertson accuses me of doing about “ Pinkie ”) into writing this work, then the book, like the fairy play, would in a sense be mine, for I too love Henry James, only my artistry is not sufficient to explain and analyse all my many and various reasons why. Max Beerbohm must do this for me.

Henry James is to me personally the embodiment of his books, he is so polished, so finished, so delicate, so distinguished a gentleman, and withal so very human and kind.

The first time I met him I sat next him at a dinner. I had just come to London, and he asked me if I liked it. I said I hadn't made up my mind, and he said I would,—that in London you were allowed every independence of opinion and action, only you must contribute something socially—beauty (and he bowed very courteously to me, and I bowed very prettily to him) or wit, or agreeableness, and then London accepted you. I said, "History repeats itself. In Texas, where I was born, they say a man is not asked his nationality, his religion, or his politics, but only if he is a good fellow."

"Ah," said Mr James, "then London is the Texas of Europe."

A life-long friend of Henry James and a witty woman from Boston, in speaking of him to me, said, "He has most noble qualities, and is a sort of Massachusetts Sir Galahad." I asked her why he had never married, and she said he never wanted to, that he was once engaged to be married, and when the lady broke it off he was so grateful to her that he became her devoted friend for life. "He never," she said, "tempted Fate again. The next time the lady might not have been so kind."

I remember on another occasion a man saying to him, "You knew Mrs Y. very well?"

"Yes," said Henry James, "she was clever, a great mathematician."

"And," said the gentleman, "remarkably untruthful, wasn't she?"

"Well," said Henry James, "she might have been described as mathematically mendacious."

I have known quite ordinary liars to entertain the futile hope of rendering an acute triangle into a parallelogram, but a mendacious mathematician would of course lie on a more probable basis.

CHAPTER LIV

HENRY JAMES, ELLEN TERRY, AND OLD LACE

A GOOD many years ago I was an almost chronic invalid, and a German doctor told me that I could be cured by an operation. The doctors in England disagreed, saying I would probably die under it, but finally life became such a burden that I decided to take a sporting chance with death and have it done. Lawson Tait was to do it, I assuming all the responsibility. The time was fixed, the nurse was engaged, and the doctor was coming the next morning at nine o'clock, and I had told no one at all—not even T. P.—when in the afternoon Henry James came to call, we had an amusing hour together, and just as he was going away I said, “I shall see you again, of course, but I am going under an operation to-morrow and the doctors think it rather serious. I don’t know,” I said, “why I’ve bothered you with it, for I’ve told nobody, and I don’t intend to.”

“What,” said Mr James, coming instantly back again,—“why, this is very sad ;” and no one could have been more kind or sympathetic. He was greatly touched by what he considered my “courage,” which seemed to me only a natural dislike of fussiness, and a desire to save T. P. anxiety, but that day T. P., against my express desire, was informed of the imminent operation by my own doctor, and at first he flatly refused his consent, but was persuaded into it later. The person most terribly anxious and worried was my faithful friend and collie, Max. He always remained downstairs in the evening to guard the house, but not that evening. He refused to leave me, and sat with his head on my knee,

rolling his eyes, until the whites were visible, at the nurse and the various preparations, and sighing profoundly. Nor did he leave me during the night, although he always slept in the hall. When the doctors came in the morning he was pulled out of the room by the collar, and when my bedroom door was closed he sat with his head against it until the operation was over, and when one of the doctors opened the door he slipped quietly in the room, crawled under the bed, and except to get food and water in the kitchen, he never left me for a week. When I woke up from the stertorous sleep of an anodyne, the first thing I saw was a big bunch of white lilac and white roses from Henry James, and later on came this note :

“ 34 DE VERE GARDENS, W.,
“ *Saturday*, P.M.

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—I am much touched by the kindness as well as courage of your note, which is almost intolerably pathetic. I rejoice exceedingly in your security and convalescence, but disapprove still more intensely of your pretending as yet to know anything about complicated and remote consequences. Wait till you have been restored to the social circle that deplors your absence—*then* we’ll talk ! Talk meanwhile as little as possible—don’t even *think*, if such a feat is possible to your irrepressible mind ! Only peacefully exist, regularly eat, abundantly sleep, and serenely wait. Meanwhile a lot of helpful thinking will be done *for* you about you ; even by yours, dear Mrs O’Connor, most truly,

HENRY JAMES ”

How I prized that letter, even more than the flowers, for they are withered, but the kindly words will ever be mine.

The operation was successful, and the following summer I could walk for miles without fatigue—a thing I had not been able to do in years.

But “ to sleep abundantly,” that has always been denied me. Oh, the terrible bouts of insomnia that ever pursue me ! Why my brain has not succumbed to this constant torture I know not, only that I began life with the con-

stitution of Texas mustangs, the ponies that can stand hard work, immense fatigue, and even a moderate amount of starvation and yet thrive on it. And of all people Ellen Terry is most constantly associated with my insomnia, for I so often remember in the long, wakeful hours her unspeakable kindness. Some friend told her that I was suffering from this heart-breaking malady. At the time she was on tour under her own management and overwhelmed with work, and what does she do but put everything aside, and write me a long letter offering me her cottage in the country, and making arrangements for the grocer and the butcher and the milkman to call, telling me where I could engage "a general" until my own servant arrived, and going into every smallest detail for my comfort. What a sunny, kind and generous nature she has! I wonder if anyone has ever known Ellen Terry without being under some sort of obligation to her of actual service or sympathy. And how delightfully quaint she is, and how unlike other people! Long ago, she and Sir Henry were dining at the Laboucheres; they were already a little late, when I saw her whisper something to Mrs Labouchere, who smiled, and Ellen ran lightly upstairs and presently came down again beaming. It seemed she had expressed a desire to clean her teeth, and asking if there were a new tooth brush in the house, Mrs Labouchere said she would find one in the washstand drawer of the bathroom. The dear! we would all have waited dinner with pleasure, if she had even decided on a Turkish bath.

We were neighbours in Chelsea, Ellen Terry and I, but both busy women, and I rarely saw her, and had not heard from her in many months, when one morning I received a letter enclosing a lovely piece of old lace. Of course I was mightily pleased, wrote and thanked her and heard no more. When the summer came, a special blue muslin was bought, and a collar embroidered in little white sprigs and finished by the lace, and the beauty of that cerulean gown was commented upon by everybody. One day I made a special journey to see Ellen, and asked if she liked the dress, and said, "I am wearing your lace, you see!"

"My lace!" she said looking surprised, "did I give you that lace?"

"You did," I said.

"Why did I?" she asked.

"I have never known," I said.

"Well anyhow," she said, "it was very sweet of me, and the lace is sweet and so are you," and she kissed me, and I daresay by now has quite forgotten the incident. I have the collar still, and I hope I will be always associated in her mind with anything so pleasant as old lace or lavender.

I had occasion to borrow her scarlet robes for a study made by a friend of me as Portia—and she was so gracious about it, sending this letter in reply:

"22 BARKSTON GARDENS,

"EARL'S COURT, S.W.

"MY DEAR BESSIE,—Of course I will lend you my 'Portia' robes, and have directed my theatre maid to pack them off this day.

"Eight people in my household have influenza and we have a hospital nurse, and this state of affairs means a good deal of extra work, or else I should have answered your letter before to-day. You will excuse me, I am sure, now I have told you of my influenza happenings.—Yours affectionately,

"ELLEN TERRY

"P.S.—Another excuse! I had a birthday yesterday—that was a fierce affair, I assure you."

And shortly after she wrote me again:

"22 BARKSTON GARDENS,

"EARL'S COURT, S.W.,

"*Sunday, May 26th.*

"MY DEAR BESSIE,—Will you tell me who Gertrude Hall is? Her lines, 'The Rival,' in this week's 'Sun,' are rather remarkable and I should say one day, not in too great a hurry, since most good things come stronger slowly, she will be able to write for the stage. Do please tell me whether

she is young, poor, and of dark complexion ? And ' excuse me ' for troubling you.—With love, yours affectionately,

“ ELLEN TERRY ”

With difficulty I unearthed Gertrude Hall's poem, which did not strike me as anything remarkable ; it just fitted into some mood or memory of Ellen's, and Gertrude Hall herself I never discovered.

Ellen Terry, the woman with her gentle sweetness, has a successful rival in Ellen Terry the actress ; for myself there is no artist who has given me so much and such heartfelt pleasure. When she comes dancing upon the stage like embodied sunshine, and holds out her arms, taking every individual in the audience, figuratively speaking, to her large and tender heart, her words, whatever they may be, *mean* the dear old doggerel of my childhood :

“ If you love me as I love you,
No knife can cut our love in two.”

I am always permeated with wonder that so much appealing joy and friendliness can dart so directly beyond the foot-lights, and never do I love her more than when she hesitates over her words, and fills them in with the most delightful business. And occasionally she supplies even Shakespeare with a word of her own.

In the “ Merry Wives of Windsor ” Mistress Page says to Falstaff : “ On my word, it will serve him ; she's as big as he is : and there's her thrummed hat, and her muffler too : Run up, Sir John.”

Instead of muffler, Ellen sometimes substituted “ thing-um-ey.”

And the audience twinkled over “ thing-um-ey ” and thought it Shakespeare !

I am sure the immortal poet would have changed the word himself, if he had seen how adorable and amusing it was made by Ellen Terry.

Laurence Irving has a far greater sin on his soul, for in “ Coriolanus ” he wrote a long, fine, high-sounding, brave,

warlike speech for Sir Henry, who gave it with great emphasis, and the critics never one of them discovered the clever Irvingesque intrusion. Of all the many young men who are his disciples Tolstoy should be proudest of Laurence Irving. He is a very remarkable man, possessing ideality, straightforwardness, wonderful refinement of mind, and has a high, and even a noble sense of duty toward his fellow men. He is a better author than actor, and it is a pity he writes so little. His tragedy, "Richard Lovelace," is like an old-fashioned ballad, rendered into a charming poetic play. Mrs Irving (Mabel Hackney) was delightful in it. She is one of the most gifted of the younger actresses of the day.

CHAPTER LV

A LACE POCKET HANDKERCHIEF AND ST JOSEPH

ONE of my very first recollections of London is connected with the stage—Wilson Barrett gave us a dinner in his pretty house in St John's Wood. The fashion of white and light rooms was then unknown, and the drawing-room walls were covered in brown velvet, and silver candelabra gave the necessary light. It was neither a cheerful nor a gay room, but I must say very becoming as a background to the women. A daughter of William Morris, with clear serious eyes that had a sort of glow within, wore a long classic white gown tightly embroidered in a thread of green silk, and against the rich dark background she looked like a tall, pale lily. Olive Schriener, the author of "An African Farm," was in London then, and I remember we spoke of her. She was a little thing with bright red cheeks, much dark curly hair, and a pleasant manner, but not at all romantic looking. I always liked Wilson Barrett: there was something boyish about him, even in his acting, which was stagey, but in many respects very fine. When I saw him in "The Sign of the Cross" I actually soaked a handkerchief with tears, and as I left the theatre, put the wet little wad in an envelope, and wrote "My tribute" upon it, and sent it around to the stage door.

The next day came this note :

" LYRIC THEATRE,
" SHAFTESBURY AVENUE,
" Jan. 22nd, 1896.

" DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—This affair of the dripping handkerchief must not be misconstrued by Mr O'Connor.

I presume he is not an Othello ! I received your tribute of tears, and enclosed is but a poor return for them—but please accept it as a small token of gratitude. I am glad you so thoroughly enjoyed yourself. When next you come to see the play please let me shake hands with you, it is too long a time since we met.

“ Give my kindest greetings to your husband, and believe me, ever yours,
WILSON BARRETT ”

The letter enclosed the loveliest possible Valenciennes pocket handkerchief tied with emerald green ribbons—and Wilson Barrett told me afterwards that he bought it himself, and was so afraid it would not be as real as my tears, but I assured him it was.

“ *July 21st.*

“ DEAR MRS O’CONNOR,—To-morrow is my farewell day and night, so it will not be possible for me to come, much as I regret it.

“ The Prince of Wales and a very distinguished audience will be present in the evening. I am so sorry that you cannot come yourself.

“ Will you bring Mrs Leslie to see the last of my London performances ? ‘ Hamlet ’ begins at 7.45. If you can come let me know at once and I will send you a box.—
“ With kindest regards, ever yours sincerely,

“ WILSON BARRETT ”

In answer to this note I saw his “ Hamlet ” but did not care for it at all. I sent Agnes Vale to see “ The Sign of the Cross ” and she said she felt more “ at home ” in it than any play she ever saw. When I asked why, she said it reminded her so much of the life of St Agnes.

I had a great regard for the opinion of Agnes Vale, who lived with me five years, a dear devoted little person in my service ; she was a housemaid in reality, but a lady in feeling.

After she had been with me some months she said to me,

" You know, dear madame, the way I came to you was this : The nuns sent me out to my first place and it was a very bad one, and I went back to the convent at the end of the month, and then I told St Joseph that I was not like most girls, I wouldn't ask him for a husband—that might be more difficult for him—but I would ask him for a nice, kind lady ; and then I went out and I bought his statue a new brown dress, and I made it and put it on him, and then, dear madame, St Joseph sent me you. Well, that wasn't so bad in him, was it ? "

I have an idea that Agnes really established my having a sort of claim upon St Joseph, for, after that she was always asking him little favours for me, and once when I was very ill, my good little friend had three Masses said for my recovery, and, like the little lady that she was, never told me that she had paid for them, lest I should feel under obligation to her. But St Joseph did not protect her from a most unfortunate experience. She was very thrifty and I paid her wages only quarterly. Just before I went abroad one summer, I gave her her quarter's wages, seven pounds. As ill-luck would have it, a short time afterwards a woman came to the house and rang the door bell and Agnes opened it. " Is this Miss——? " " Vale ? " Agnes supplied. " Yes," the woman answered, " you are exactly the person I have come to see. Is Mrs O'Connor in town ? "

" No," said Agnes, " she is in France."

" Oh," said the woman, " what a pity ! You know how kind she is."

" Yes," Agnes said.

" Well ! " the woman replied, " I have £300 that Mrs O'Connor has promised to invest for me, would you mind taking care of it until she returns ? "

" Oh, certainly," Agnes said, " but perhaps Mr O'Connor would be better.

" Oh, no ! " the woman answered, " this is a secret between Mrs O'Connor and myself, and I want you to take care of the £300 only until she returns from Paris. When will that be ? "

Agnes told her that I was expected back at the end of the week.

"Well," said the woman, "I will return with the £300 and you will take care of it for me. The moment Mrs O'Connor arrives please give it to her."

Agnes said she would and the woman turned to go. Then a thought, Agnes said, seemed to come to her, and she came back saying, "But until I get the £300 I have no money, I wonder if you would let me have £3?"

"Oh!" said Agnes confidently, "I can let you have £7."

The woman said that would be even better, and so she took the £7 and was to return with the £300 in a few hours. Of course she was never heard of again.

When I came back and Agnes related the incident to me with many flowing tears, I really could not sympathize with her greatly and I said to her:

"Agnes, you are an intelligent human being. You know that I have no secrets, whatever; that my letters are always lying about open; that I never had seen this woman before; and you know that I am not a business woman."

Agnes said she knew that.

I said to her. "Why didn't you put your thinking cap on and remember that Mr O'Connor's secretary, Mr Walker, pays all my bills and pays all the household bills, and under these circumstances with no command over any money whatever for myself, and knowing nothing about investments, why in the world should an utter stranger bring me £300 to put out at interest for her? Really," I said, "you have been too foolish."

Tears flowed afresh and poor Agnes retreated to the kitchen.

Angèle, a nice little French maid, was living with me at the time and was just beginning to speak English, but her vocabulary was most limited. She said she was very sorry for Agnes and I said I had no patience with her, that she was such a donkey, and in order to explain my description to Agnes it was necessary for Angèle to give fearful hee-haws in the kitchen in imitation of the beast whose name she did

not know in English. With this Agnes returned to me and said, she would much rather have parted with the £7 than have had me call her a "Hee-haw." Whereupon my conscience troubled me so dreadfully that I made her a present of £2 towards the loss of the £7, and by strict economy, before the end of the year, she had with Christmas boxes nearly made up the amount.

Agnes left me only on account of a long illness, and she has been some eight or nine years now in her place, but she still prays to St Joseph for me, and comes regularly to see me ; and though she says her new lady is a Saint, she has confided to me that she has never felt "at home" with her as she did with me, and she has always the intention of some day coming back to live with me again.

CHAPTER LVI

FAITHFUL ENGLISH KINDNESS

“ If we sit down at set of sun
And count the things that we have done,
And counting find one self-denying act,
One word that eased the heart of him who heard,
One glance most kind that fell like sunshine where it went,
Then we may count the day well spent.” GEORGE ELIOT

WHEN I think of all the kindness I have received at the hands of my English friends, it overwhelms me. Years ago after introducing Thomas Nelson Page, that most gifted author and charming of men, to Lady St Helier, she said to me, “ It was so nice of you to bring him to see me—remember your friends are always welcome in my house.” I have not abused her generous offer, but it greatly touched me. What a wonderful combination she is of capability, tact, utter unselfishness, and a thorough knowledge of the world. She and witty Mrs Louis Nixon of New York are almost the only women I have ever seen with all these qualities united. Worldliness generally means hardness in a woman, with a fair slice of selfishness—but there is nothing Lady St Helier enjoys more than sacrificing herself. Her door is ever on the latch, and oftentimes when the house is filled to overflowing with visitors, she gives up her own room to some one—perhaps a nurse with a convalescent child who has been undergoing some operation—and she herself sleeps on the sofa in a dressing-room. She is without a particle of personal vanity. I remember after lunch one day, before her two pretty daughters were married, going upstairs with her while she put on her bonnet. On looking for a veil she found that her

girls had taken both her new ones, and she seemed rather pleased than otherwise to have them appropriate what they liked. She loves drudging, really working for other people, and in her whole life she has never refused sympathy or kindness to one in trouble or in need.

Sir Francis was equally kind ; his close proximity in the Divorce Court to human nature, necessarily at its worst and most untruthful on account of the unjust laws, but gave him greater faith in the goodness of men and women. He once said to me, "It was impossible for a Divorce Court Judge ever to lose his faith in the inherent goodness of man, seeing, as he did daily, revelations of long and patient martyrdoms silently borne by men and women whose relief oftentimes came too late."

One night at Lady St Helier's I sat next to the Right Honble. Cecil Raikes, at that time Postmaster General. He wanted to know what he could do to show his appreciation of an Anglo-American, and I instantly asked for a pillar-box to be put up before the front door of Oakley Lodge. He laughingly said it should be done at once. T. P. was surprised at my request, and going home gave me a lecture on the freedom of my American manners. I said "Wouldn't it be nice to have a nearer pillar box?" He agreed that it would, but said it was impossible. However a very few days later a Government cart drove up, and deposited exactly opposite our door a shining new pillar box, and when T. P. returned at midnight from the House of Commons there was my scarlet triumph to greet him.

When we lived in Grosvenor Road I saw a little boy drowned in the river, just before the house—a heart-breaking experience—and the very same day (luckily, I had gone out), a second boy suffered a like fate. It was a favourite part of the Thames for swimmers, so I went to the Chief of Police and begged to have a policeman stationed there for the protection of boys—and in an hour the policeman arrived, with orders to report to me, that I might show him the exact place of danger. I did not get back until six o'clock, and there he stood, and had been standing like a sentinel in front of the

house all day. They had told him nothing at Scotland Yard except that he was to take an order from me. T. P. wondered why on earth a giant policeman was standing directly before our front door, and said, when I explained, that we were eternally compromised with the neighbours, who would think we were under observation. (It was at a time when there was much talk about dynamite.) Quite like a sergeant I marched before that policeman, showed him the treacherous eddy, and after that no more casualties occurred. Subsequently I made the strangest request in the world to the Chief of Police (I find policemen, like soldiers, very sympathetic), and he was instantly kind and interested and granted my request without a smile. A dear friend, Madame X., sent for me to come and see her. She was in bitter trouble: her husband, an important foreign correspondent living in London, had written her from Austria saying that it was impossible for him ever to return to England, as he was being continually watched and persecuted by Oriental Jews, who were employed for that purpose by the British Government. Of course this was an utter delusion from which, poor man, he suffered intermittently until his death, and this was his first attack—and there he was, alone and completely terrorized by his diseased imagination. His wife, who was quite devoted to him, could not go to fetch him, as she was hourly expecting a child. I read his letter carefully, and drove to Scotland Yard with it, explained all the circumstances to the Chief of Police, and asked him to send an official document to my friend with an official seal and to assure him in the “Whereas, whereby, we, the undersigned” style of literature that the British Government loved him and desired his presence above all things in London. A fine large cream-coloured document dangling with seals was despatched, and it worked like a charm. My friend returned, and for a time lost sight entirely of his delusions, but finally, poor man, all documents and arguments lost effect, and they plagued him out of existence.

One autumn T. P. was in a most depressed state of mind about the lowness of his exchequer, and I said, “Why don’t

you do some work for the 'Daily Telegraph'? I am sure they would be glad to have you."

"Oh, no," he said, "they wouldn't; but they know where I am, and if they wanted me to do any work they would say so."

I had just been reading an American paper, and this admirable sentiment vulgarly but pertinently expressed struck my fancy: "The difference between a fellow who succeeds and one who fails is that the first gets out and chases after the men who need him, and the second sits around waiting to be hunted up." Now, it occurred to me the "Daily Telegraph" needed T. P., but clearly I must do the chasing. So I wrote Lord Burnham at Hall Barn, and delicately advised him to invite us there for a week-end, which he did. Then we had a long walk and talk, and I placed my innocent scheme before his sweet and kindly inspection, and he at once promised to help me, and it ended in his offering T. P. "The Bar of the House" and various other work for the "Daily Telegraph," which tided us over what might have been a very uncomfortable time. Why is it that so many men dislike being under an obligation to a woman? And yet the woman who is capable of making an obligation is strong enough to be generous, and to forget it. I never confided to T. P. that I was "the fellow who chased around," and until this fitting moment of acknowledging my many, many obligations to various kind and generous people, I have not spoken of Lord Burnham's responsive and practical sympathy. But he knows I am grateful. I am always grateful for kindness—thank Heaven, my soul is big enough to bear the weight of gratitude—a weight that is insupportable to many otherwise excellent people. Too much importance is given to gratitude; personally, I don't care a rush whether people are grateful to me or not. If, in my small way, I can be of service to my fellow man and he forgets, all right!—the action has benefited my own character and that is the best of benefits.

I owe a whole mountain of gratitude to the Society of Women Journalists, who, quite without consulting me, and

most unexpectedly, elected me their president. Later, a member confided to me the secret of my having been elected by a unanimous vote. I said "This is because you don't know me—popularity so often comes from a want of intimacy." But in justice to the Society, when they did know me they re-elected me for a second term, and, what was a great gratification, the number of members doubled under my two years of service.

CHAPTER LVII

MY SOUL IS LARGE ENOUGH TO BEAR THE WEIGHT OF GRATITUDE

MRS MACKAY while I was president gave the annual party for the Society of Women Journalists, in her beautiful house in Carlton House Terrace, and she took as much pains in entertaining them as if they had been princesses. Besides our own Italian Concert, which Henry Russell furnished from his operatic company singing in London that season, Mrs Mackay had an excellent band, which discoursed gay music after the concert, and the supper was quite royal, with peaches out of season, white grapes, iced champagne and all sorts of delicacies, of which to tell the truth I did not partake, being rather agitated over her vexation with me, for, alas, I was late, and she had to receive a large number of my guests alone. But as many of them had never seen me, and took it for granted they were speaking to Mrs O'Connor, and she has the sweetest and most cordial manners in the world, it was not really a matter of any moment to anyone except herself, but she did give me such a scolding. I was perfectly convulsed with laughter, and so was she and eventually she forgave me.

I do not know why it is that I am always expecting a miracle to be performed for me and time to stretch itself longer than it ever does ; yet it is never because I am lazy that I am late, but on account of my doing too much. Once I was nearly dining in the wrong house, through this reprehensible habit of mine. Rushing off to Mr Seale Hayne's to dine, I promised an extra shilling to the cabman if he would

drive very quickly, so we dashed up to the first red carpet in Belgrave Square, I ran in, saying to the butler, "I fear that I am late." He made no reply, but gave a haughty sniff and showed me upstairs, whereupon a very agreeable man came forward to meet me, whom I had never seen before; then I gasped out, "Oh, dear me, I'm afraid this is not the house; I am dining with Mr Seale Hayne, do you know where he lives?" "Yes," he said, "only three doors from here," and he escorted me downstairs. I was much relieved, for I felt that I really needed protection from that butler, who looked simply scandalized, and sure enough three doors away was another red carpet, but if I had never seen Mr Seale Hayne (and I had only seen him once) I should have dined at the first house.

Two or three days afterwards I went to call on Miss Roosevelt, who is now Mrs Coles, and I said, "I think I have been here before. Didn't I come the other night to dine when I wasn't expected?" She said, "Oh, that was you, was it? My cousin told me afterwards that a greatly agitated lady came to dinner at the last moment, and he was sure she belonged to us and was an American, and he was sorry he had not begged her to stay and dine." I said, "So indeed am I."

T. P. once tried his hand at my reformation. We were going to the theatre together. I was just a *little* late and he suddenly announced that he wanted to see the curtain go up. I said, "But you never have seen a curtain go up, and you haven't had your dinner!" He replied that that did not matter: he would much rather be in time for the theatre than eat his dinner, and full of righteous wrath he dashed off in a cab alone, telling me to follow him later. I did, and found him and two other people in the audience sitting in a dimly lighted theatre at the end of a long and stupid *léver de rideau*. I had had my dinner quite comfortably and was in time to see the piece. I did not crow over him—it would have been too cruel—but that unhappy experience made him once and for all abandon my reformation.

I have explained to him more than once that I am never really late : that I only *seem* late, on account of my manifold occupations.

And Mrs Bland Sutton was as kind as Mrs Mackay in giving me her unique house for the annual party of the Society of Women Journalists, and what a royal party it was ! She kept saying to me " It is a big house, and we must have enough people to furnish it," so between us we sent out eight hundred invitations, and it just happened that there was nothing going on that night, and everybody came.

We blocked up the entire street in front of Claridge's, and one friend who with great difficulty had made her way up the stairs to ask if she might bring in her son went down for him and was never able to get back again. It was indeed like one of the illustrations in " Punch," where a severe-looking policeman standing in front of a large crowd before a house is admonishing a well-dressed young man to move on ; the young man answers : " I can't, I'm at a party ! "

But the people who had got in said they had never enjoyed themselves more, and I quite believe it. Mrs Bland Sutton loves lavishly entertaining and filling her house with hosts of friends ; and I owe not only her an obligation for kindness, but her husband as well. He is one of the most remarkable men in London. A great Shakespearian scholar, a fine natural historian, and a genius as a surgeon. He lives for his work and loves it, and even with the most serious cases he is so sure of success that his patients imbibe his confident spirit, and recover with astonishing rapidity. I went into a Nursing Home a little while ago and he performed an operation for me, and in a week I was out and at home again. And then there is another friend whose kindness I shall never, never be able to repay : my doctor who has attended me for twenty-five years, Dr Septimus Sunderland. I think I have never seen such a fine consistent character. His friendship is as steady as a rock, and his unselfishness is so great that he actually likes the people who exact the most of

him and give him the least. The Christmas before last I was in America and missed my usual Christmas present, so last Christmas he gave me two, the one of the year before, and the one of the present Christmas. My son asked him why he gave me any present at all. He said, "My mother demands your services as her natural right, and is always bothering you about something or other. I suppose it is your quaint English sense of humour which makes you give presents to the people who should give presents to you." I revel in this quaint sense of English humour and always encourage it. And the hospitality that I have received in England which I have never been able to return, really it has been overwhelming, especially from my friends who are lucky enough to have theatres. I wonder how many notes I have written to thank Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree for his hospitality, and Sir Charles Wyndham, and George Alexander, and Cyril Maude, and George Edwardes, and that most fascinating being Charles Hawtrey. And how am I to express my unspeakable gratitude to my ever hospitable and most kind friend Oswald Stoll of Hippodrome fame? Again and again has he been most prodigal in his hospitality to me, and not only that, but he laughed so enormously at some of my stories, negro and otherwise, that he decided I should have an appearance at one of his numerous music halls, under another name, and in that way we would find out if a London audience could stand me. I was a fortnight getting my music-hall manner, and apparently never got it. Graham Robertson was my only confidant and he wrote to give me courage :

"SANDHILLS, WITLEY.

"I heard much abuse of you from Ellen Terry, which (of course) I good-naturedly repeat. She said that she had seen you as the Texas lady, and that your behaviour in not sticking to the boards had been simply idiotic. That you had a dainty personal charm which she would not have expected to get over the footlights, but that to her surprise it *did*, and gave you a grip of the audience that much experience cannot always bring. That in short you were cut out for a play-

actress, and why you do not play-act she could not imagine. There !

“ GRAHAM ”

And later :

“ SANDHILLS, WITLEY.

“ But I am bursting to know how went the Monologue. It *must* have happened by now. I gathered from your letter that it was imminent. Do tell me—was the ovation in the shape of roses and lilies, or eggs and cats ? If the former, we will rejoice in the intelligence of the public—if the latter, we will remember its frequent lack of appreciation of genius and the début of Sarah Siddons. Anyhow—do tell me.

“ Here it rains and rains, and Bob, and Portly, and I, are just about sick of it. And yesterday a thunderstorm got into the garden and I couldn't get it out. As soon as it had cleared out at the bottom it tumbled in again at the top—like pigs.

“ And one can't sit in the cellar all day. And of course when it went, it took the summer with it and now it's bitterly cold, and I wish you the Compliments of the Season and a Merry Christmas, and am.—Yours sincerely,

“ GRAHAM ”

I was announced as Mrs Carey from Virginia, and came on in my own whitening hair and a pompadour dress, just after a gentleman from my native land, a real negro, attired in a scarlet hat, a grey suit, and scarlet gloves. He sang and danced and showed all his fine white teeth, and the audience loved him. But Mrs Carey from Virginia, the imitation article, trembling and nervous, with her miserable tears just behind her smile, and her little negro and drawing-room stories, oh dear me, no, they were completely nonplussed and wouldn't have her for one moment. They told her firmly but politely to get back to Virginia as soon as possible and to stop there. Of course the faithful Rose was with me and one of the ushers said, “ I know that Mrs Carey : she is Mrs T. P. O'Connor. I saw her in ‘ The Lady from Texas. ’ ” Rose tossed her head, and when the audience drowned my voice in

satiric applause, like Peter she denied me. Whatever I am fitted for, evidently it is not for music hall performances, but all the same I am grateful to Mr Stoll who did his best for me. I have so longed to make money, and the big salaries the artists receive make even the poor amateur desperately bold. "A fool has only one teacher : she arrives too late, and her name is Consequences." Hammersmith was my night of consequences. One life-long friend in the audience wrote me this consolatory letter. I really didn't mind much, as I half expected failure, since Fate on every occasion disciplines her unfortunate but persevering step-daughter.

" 4 NEVERN SQUARE,
" EARL'S COURT, S.W.,
" *Thursday.*

" MY DEAREST BESSIE,—I do hope that your reception last night is not troubling you unduly. It was so easily understood. I really think that your audience was quite prepared to be pleased, for you looked charming and appeared perfectly self-possessed, but I don't think your choice of stories was a happy one for *any* music hall audience. I have heard you tell many far better at your own table, but I question if even the best of them would have appealed to *such* an audience. 'The Gods,' from whom all the opposition came, could make nothing of the Tiara story. I thought you wonderfully plucky to brave it out as you did—but you always are brave. You were really most beautifully gowned, and looked so very elegant and graceful.

" Don't worry, darling. All who really care for you only love you the better for the ceaseless disappointments and sorrows that have met you at almost every turn in life. Certainly *I* do. I hesitated to intrude upon your dressing-room last night, feeling sure that you were not alone, and thinking it probable you might have immediately driven off. You may perhaps be in town when I get back and we shall meet.—Very lovingly yours,

" EDITH WEYLAN "

Another friend who has extended wide-armed hospitality to me, given me much wise and sound advice, and helped me in great difficulties, is my solicitor, Clement Locke Smiles, a high-minded man who, like my father, never said or did or thought a mean thing. To him I am under never ending, happy, and grateful obligations as well as to all my unselfish and hospitable friends who have contributed to my enjoyment and pleasure for so many years. They have kept me in England, for as I grow older the cold and damp of the climate chills me more and more, and if it was not that love, and affection, and friendship make warmth and sunshine for me here, I should go back to happier lands of sun.

CHAPTER LVIII

ALL ABOUT ROSE AND THE DUTCH

IN Germany, next to the Triple Alliance, the most serious thing in the country is a mud bath—or a whole series of mud baths are more serious still. First, you consult a doctor ; he looks very grave and important and orders you two mud baths a week, of ten minutes each, of a tepid temperature. After two weeks, if you still survive the four, you follow these with three mud baths a week, of a higher temperature, resting much in between, until twelve, or fifteen baths at most, complete the cure. Then you remain quiet for a few days and round up in a high and bracing place with a nach cure.

But I reversed the old order of things, having no doctor, and a supreme confidence in myself and in German mud. I dashed in, took a daily mud bath of half an hour each, had myself wrapped in blankets afterwards, and dripped for a matter of forty minutes, and in sixteen days I had completed my cure with a rapidity, a courage, and a thoroughness unheard of in all Germany. Every day a tragic result was expected—a sudden fit of apoplexy, or heart failure—but I struggled through the sixteen most valiantly, though towards the end very, very weakly. Indeed, after a bath, I could scarcely drag myself home, and my heart behaved as if I was desperately in love and my lover had deserted me for the woman I most loathed in all the world. It stood still, it beat violently, it stopped, went on, left its moorings entirely, and made every effort to occupy an absolutely new place in my breast. When my nose grew pinched and my upper lip turned a chalky white, Rose stepped in and forcibly put me

to bed, and kept me there for five days. This rest gave me time to think and to take a still more sporting chance with death, a gentleman of whom I am not in the least afraid. For in the last few years of incurable torturing insomnia how often have I longed for an unawakening sleep!—

“ I am tired of tears and laughter
 And men that laugh and weep ;
 Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap ;
 I am weary of days and hours,
 Blown buds of barren flowers,
 Desires and dreams and powers,
 And everything but sleep.”

In the meantime I knew I ought to rest, that quiet was necessary to make my heart behave itself just ordinarily well, that my banking account was overdrawn, that I couldn't be poorer, and could ill afford a cab ride, much less a trip in Holland ; and these adverse reasons all decided me to take it.

I had travelled through Holland for eighteen years, and always planned to see a bit of it, and on other occasions it would have been convenient and easy—but all other journeys would have lacked the salt and savour of this. A sporting chance with death, and no money, so what fun ! And Rose—my jewel of the world, my faithful comfort, my secretary, my confidante, my dear, dear one. I wrote a friend : “ I am travelling in Holland and very ill, but if I die, Rose will be equal to the occasion.” And so she would, God bless her. What a wonder she is ! She has made but one mistake in her life, a very serious one—she has neglected to become an English Joan of Arc. How well she would have looked the part, and played it too. She is tall, with an erect, soldierly, rounded figure, and a pretty, rosy, fresh face with wonderfully clear, steady, sensible, dove-coloured eyes and long curly eyelashes. And she loves to do things—to organize and plan, and contrive, and work, and accomplish—and all in the best possible manner. But what is so wonderful is that she likes to work for me better than I like to work for myself. She loves to bring order out of chaos, to answer

dozens of letters, to return borrowed books, to send away promised photographs, to mend and to darn, and to clean, and to make over, and to economize, and all for me. But not for long, else life would be too sweet—for, alas, she belongs to another. She is the wife of a fine, smart soldier man, an imposing picture in his bearskin, and now and then he feels so sorry for me that he lends me Rose, and for a little while I pretend to be rich and happy, until she is taken away from me again, and then comes gloom and despair. If she had only been commander of the army, the Boer War would have been ended in a trice. It is too late now, I fear, for the Joan of Arc rôle—neither her husband nor myself could possibly spare her, even for the good of the country. But there is no reason why Mr Haldane should not now and then consult her. She knows more about the army than anybody in England, her heart is loyal, and her mind is wise, just and courageous—three admirable qualities for a soldier, and still more admirable for the wife of one. Among other soldierly qualities Rose has learned obedience—usually a cheerful obedience without any arguing: it is only when my nose is pinched that she admonishes me.

“Rose,” I remarked, “we are going to Holland.” I was in bed and my voice was very weak.

She looked at me gravely and the dove eyes were reproachful.

Rose. “Why, do you want to kill yourself?”

Me. “I don’t mind. Anyhow with death stalking along between us we are going to Holland—but you know how often I’ve been dreadfully ill, and yet I always get well. Death doesn’t like me—you know he doesn’t.”

Rose. “You are a great responsibility. What would I do if anything happened to you?”

Me. “Have me buried in a quiet churchyard away from motors, and put up a neat headstone with a suitable inscription.”

Rose. “And what should it be?”

Me. “Say: ‘Sacred to the memory of Betty. She loved Hollyhocks.’”

Rose. "But you love all flowers. Why Hollyhocks?"

Me. "Don't quibble. Let it stand at Hollyhocks—and pack for Holland."

The soldier reappeared, and Rose packed.

Have you noticed that it is never possible to like a belonging of your own as much as a belonging of your neighbour's? For example, Lady P., who has correct and beautiful taste, when travelling in Germany picked up a basket and brought it back to Lura, my sweet and pretty daughter. She isn't really my daughter, she is my son's wife, but I've made myself her mother, and she has made herself my daughter, and we both scorn the "in law," two hateful words made for the unloving. It was a straw basket of charming proportions, filled with natural flowers prepared in a cunning German fashion to render them everlasting. The green leaves were thick, full, and curly, and at equal distances small bunches of pink flowers were stiffly grouped, and there was a nice pungent odour about it like the paint that Mrs Ham, Shem and Japheth diffused from the Noah's Arks of my childhood. I wanted that basket badly, but Lura wouldn't give it to me. She had several excuses: first, Lady P. had given it to her; second, it was convenient when other flowers were withered to ornament the dinner-table; and third, she said, "Mother, you live with me and the basket is just as much yours as mine, you are not housekeeping, you can always *see* the basket, what do you want with another?" All the same I wanted that basket. And I want still more her empire wreath in small diamonds, also a gift of Lady P.'s; but of course I've never breathed my desire—I've only *looked* at the brooch.

On one of my most breathless and exhausted days, I decided to go from Schwalbach to Wiesbaden for the afternoon just to see how much I could stand without dropping by the way. And there in a shop was the basket. Not of course a pink one, and a fresh one—Fate was not kind enough for that—but the identical Lura basket, only dusty and shop worn, with the flowers a faded yellow. It was like seeing the face of a friend, and the very soft-voiced and obliging salesman promised me a new basket, in which the flowers

were to be a rosy pink, and the leaves a full green, and it was to be ready packed and delivered at the station when I next passed through Wiesbaden. Also, I ordered the replica of a prettily shaped gilded laurel wreath—an offering for a friend later on—there is nothing like being prepared for an emergency, even to a laurel wreath on hand. Also I bought some lace cheap, effective and good, at a lace shop, and a brown leather bag at a reasonable price, as Germany is renowned for its “leder waaren.” And the day we started for Rotterdam a messenger awaited us with two neat packages—the wreath and the basket. How I would crow over Lura! Like the trusting soul that I am and will always remain, I paid without examining my purchases, and we proceeded on our way, unluckily by a different route, as the Rhine is more interesting than inland scenery, so I should not do it again.

In our carriage were two attractive German sisters. One of them was like a Southern American—dark skin, laughing black eyes, brilliant teeth, and an air of happiness and vigour about her that was quite infectious. My heart felt lighter and less tired in her agreeable presence. She wore a brown tailor skirt and jacket, and a panama hat with a tiny crown, evidently a German fashion, as I had seen a number of them in Wiesbaden—it is not a pretty one. Her sister was a regular Teuton, blue eyes, magnificent full light hair, and a white and red skin, but she lacked the vivacity of her sister. I wondered if the dark-eyed one was married. She looked very young, and I was sure she had many admirers. The mystery was soon solved, for when we stopped at a station I stood looking out of the window, and she was met by a young officer in undress uniform, who kissed her on both cheeks, and then held up a small man of three exactly like her, and he too kissed her many times. Then the man of three was admonished as to his manners, and he brought his heels together with quite a military click and made me the most fascinating bow. His father raised his hat, his charming mother and aunt waved their hands, and the train moved on. May all angels bless and guard them!

We arrived at Rotterdam about nine o'clock, and Rose selected the hotel as she selects race horses, because she liked the name. It was Leygraaffs. There were no guests, but much linoleum. I do not like linoleum—Rose does. She likes anything that she can wash. The luxury of washing this was denied her—we left too soon. The linoleum on my floor was a brilliant green, powdered with still more brilliant green apples. The walls were papered in brown wrapping paper, and the curtains were pale cream dimity with a blue ribbon and pink roses appliquéd on as a border. The furniture was of oak and singularly ugly. There are no dressing-tables in Holland, the washstand with drawers underneath performing a sort of double duty; the rugs scattered about were red and yellow, and the edge of the floor was painted orange. So far as I saw, outside of the Old Masters, the Dutch of to-day do not in the least trouble themselves about taste. And yet individually they make some charming things—wall-papers for example. I saw some charming wall-papers in the shops of Dutch manufacture. Another disappointment I had was through my Dutch friend, Johannes Wolff, who has been living in London nearly fifteen years, but has always scorned the English language, having instead composed a delightful vernacular of his own. "In Holland, in my country," he always assured me, "you will have a good eat." But mine was both bad and very dear. Rose has too much soul to care about food, though one of her many accomplishments is cooking. But "a good eat" pleases and cheers me. I am not one of the women who can be happy on a rusk and a cup of tea. A feast puts me in a good temper with the world and myself. A famine makes me cold to both. My palate, like my sense of smell and sense of sight, is keen. I can be and often am deceived in people, but never in food. The most talented and wonderful of cooks can make a most seductive sauce, but though concealed I at once detect the ancient butter. If a fish is not fresh I will none of him. And how people ever die of ptomaine poison from bad fish and oysters is a mystery to me. Knowing the danger as well as the disagreeableness I

should undoubtedly follow the example of the man who was invited to a public dinner, and taking his first oyster it made an instant reappearance on his plate while he blinked and said : " Now some fools would have swallowed that." And he was quite right—some timid and unscientific fools would, with the result of typhoid fever developing. I should have coughed, looked innocent, and used my napkin as a tribute to manners. But under no circumstances would I have tempted Fate by swallowing that oyster. I do not know whether the eggs in Holland were Italian or Russian, but they were travelled eggs, and eggs, to be successful, are distinctly stay-at-home products. If I were the maker of the laws of a country, foreign eggs should have a huge duty imposed upon them, then fewer stale eggs would be eaten. Having partaken of one travelled egg (Russian I think) and tea, I found the gods were still unpropitious, for when, to comfort myself with a look at my basket, Rose unpacked it and brought it to my bedside, lo, the thrifty German in Wiesbaden had simply dyed the dusty yellow flowers of the old basket a hot purple and sent that to me. Two had remained undyed, so I plucked them from their stems, enclosed them in a reproachful letter, saying I had trusted his commercial honour, and he must take back the old basket and give me a new one or else destroy all my deep and abiding confidence in German shopkeepers.

At any rate the eggs and the basket could not destroy my joy in the morning which was beautiful, cool, with sunshine, and a gay breeze. We left the Leygraaffs Hotel, and walked toward the park, passing a group of charming old houses on our right. I stopped on the bridge long enough to photograph one mentally. The house, built of white stone, was old, with green shutters, and it stood on a sort of round mound of velvety grass carpeted with daisies and dandelions, and chequered by broken blossoms. It was separated from the street by a canal and connected with it by a fine iron bridge. In front of the house were two giant horse-chestnuts laden with blossoms. I never saw such tall ones, and the trunks of the trees were all covered in ivy. At the left side

of the house an avenue of trees continued, pink horse-chestnuts, amethyst lilac trees, lavender lilac trees, and white lilac interspersed with flower-laden laburnums. When the breeze softly moved them they waved like plumes, and the fragrance of that delightful mass of superb colour was almost overpowering. The door of the house stood wide open with a hospitable smile, but there was no one in sight—only an old white and orange setter lying on the step blinking one eye at us, and almost snowed over by purple and white and yellow blossoms continually drifting down on him. It made him look like a babe in the wood. All one side of the house was completely covered by an old laburnum tree with the blossoms of a luxuriance great enough to make a blazing, waving cloth of gold. At a long distance in the park it remained with the sun striking it—a jewelled banner. The laburnum is a dear flower to me for itself and its memories. I remember long ago driving to a garden party at Mrs Labouchere's when she produced "The Tempest." In the caste were two beautiful people I loved: my son, Francis Howard, as Sebastian; and Claude Lowther, in a wonderful brodered Venetian cap, the two long feathers, silken hose, and velvet doublet, as Ferdinand. How handsome he was, and we two friends and mothers, Mrs Lowther and I, how vain we were of our boys! An American friend on whom Fortune had smiled came with his splendid carriage and horses to drive me to Pope's Villa, and we made a little *détour* to see the house of the distinguished novelist, Miss Braddon, whom my friend greatly admired, and in her garden was a laburnum tree laden with blossoms, and I loved it and called his attention to it, and said, "You can't do better than that in California, can you?" And he said, "No, but Miss Braddon must not be the only one to possess laburnum trees—to-morrow you shall have one all in bloom, growing and blowing at Oakley Lodge." And sure enough the very next morning a cart arrived and a glorious tree dripping with gold was conveyed to the garden and firmly planted in memory of our golden day. I wonder if my poor friend in the chaos of his dis-

ordered mind ever remembers when he sees the laburnum bloom. He was a bachelor, never having married, it was said, because in his youth he had fallen hopelessly in love with a *fille-de-joie*. He could not marry her : his good common sense, and he had plenty of that, forbade it : and he could not make her his friend and companion. He was a devout Catholic, a chamberlain of the Pope, and his religion forbade that. So he provided for her and left her, but he always loved her. And of all the sane people I ever met he seemed the sanest, and yet he went mad quite suddenly, raving mad, in one of the great hotels in London. And all the people who knew him were away, and his man, a timid foreigner, was frightened, and by some quibble of the law he was put into the workhouse infirmary. With all his millions to protect him, this is where he was found by his friends. And though well and strong, he has never recovered his reason. I saw him not long ago in Brighton with a roll of music under his arm. His attendant said he played the banjo a great deal, and sang the popular songs of the day. We had a long walk, and apparently rational talk together, but I was too sad to allude to the days when he was free of mind and body, full of interest in his friends, and all that concerned them, and he did not ask about the laburnum. And I did not tell him that dear Oakley Lodge and the laburnum tree had passed into the hands of strangers, for, though he was mad, it would have saddened him.

CHAPTER LIX

SYMPATHETIC WAITERS

THE parks in Holland are the loveliest I have ever seen in any country. They are unlike those in England, America and France, as we see them, all teased and artificially arranged and distorted by the hand of man—and tasteless man at that: they have the appearance of softly rolling, grassy meadows, with groups of trees, and irregular paths wandering through them. The Dutch appreciate Nature and wisely leave her to manage her own affairs, which she can do so much better than the ordinary soulless gardener.

The park at Rotterdam breaks upon your startled vision a perfect unexpected joy. What a lovely wonder to find a lush quiet meadow with the wind blowing the long grass about in waves, and a snowstorm of petals from white and red chestnut trees showering down upon it, the birds singing a thousand different songs, and the nice black and white cows, switching their tails, and with the sheep, feeding quietly, and the air scented by tall white and purple lilac, laburnum, and flowering almond, and peach trees, all jostling each other for elbow room. Think of it—a silent, sunny, apparently remote natural country meadow not a stone's throw away from a busy town and the great liners that come and go to and from America. That meadow, freshly washed by the rain and suddenly and surprisingly come upon, was a never to be forgotten picture. We seemed, except the cows, and the sheep, and the birds and the bees, and the butterflies, the only living creatures in it—and yet it was exactly five minutes' walk from our hotel.

Among my many idiosyncrasies is this : I can never think of food unless I see it. If a cook comes to me for a menu my spirit sinks to zero. My thoughts fly off at a tangent, and I can't even remember that a chicken crows. And to select a meal from a card is most wearisome to me. I both like and appreciate dainty food, but what an insufferable bore to think about it, and above all, to dwell upon it, and to order it. In crossing the Atlantic, if the waiter asks me what I want I always say : " Bring me what my next door neighbour has ordered." If this is a man, I am quite safe—it is the best the ship offers, and it saves both time and trouble. In a restaurant I ask the advice of the head waiter, and I meekly eat what he brings me. Waiters I have always found very sympathetic—porters not so much so—and cabmen not at all. In all my long years of constant cabbage I have only known three sympathetic cabmen. They were delightful—but, they were exceptions.

In Rotterdam the head waiter was very sympathetic, helpful, and solicitous, and, singularly enough, truthful. He advised lobster salad, and said the lobsters were fresh, although they came from Ostend ; and they were fresh, but muscular. It was a nice lunch, however, and he did all the thinking and waiting. Rose was meditative and silent. Like all artists, I must have expression, and as there was no one else to express myself to, I expressed myself to the waiter. I told him I wanted to come to Holland and live by the park.

" You have seen it, of course," I said.

He looked so pained I was frightened, and answered : " Seen it, Madame ! I have walked in it for four hours every day for eight months."

" Dear me ! " I exclaimed. " How delightful ! "

" No, Madame," he said, very sadly. " I had a great shock, a great grief, and I walked in the park to keep my reason."

" Oh," I replied. " I am very, very sorry—but you are better now ? "

" Yes." He spoke with resignation. " I am better. My doctor tells me I can work again, but nerve sickness is a

terrible thing. One day I was well, and this sorrow and shock struck me like a blow, and the next day I was ill—and my only rest was to walk until I could walk no more. The park! I know every foot of ground in it, every flower and shrub and tree, and almost every blade of grass. Grief is a terrible thing, Madame.”

I said, “I know—I know. I have had great grief too.”

“And could you sleep, Madame?”

“No, oh, no—and I sleep so badly now.”

“But Madame need not stay in the place where she remembers. I—well, I must stay here where I was once so happy and am now so hopeless, and I always remember.”

Then a brilliant idea came to me. I advised him comfortingly. “Take one of the big American liners and go to New York.”

“Ah, Madame,” he spoke like one beaten and discouraged—“they are not waiting for me in New York, and yet this hotel is too empty for me. There are not enough people to make me work hard and forget. I want to run here, run there, and be busy, always hard worked and busy.”

I clapped my hands with enthusiasm.

“I have it,” I said. “You must go to New York at once. It was made for you. Everybody there is running like a hare, and you can’t think for the noise.”

Rose had gone to pack the bags, or I never would have dared to say it. Here I wrote rapidly on one of my cards.

“Take that and go to the Hotel Algonquin and give it to Mr Frank Case, the proprietor of the hotel. He is good-looking, and you are good-looking” (not one least little gleam of pleasure on his poor sad face—he is the one man I have ever seen who did not rise to a compliment—he was broken-hearted indeed) “he is amiable and you are amiable, he has agreeable manners, and your manners are good, and his inn is successful and gay, and bright and clean, and hospitable and delightful, and full of people, and you will have to run all day. Frank Case has the kindest heart in the world—he will be a good friend to you. Will you go?”

At last he smiled, showing such nice clean white teeth, and

looked for a moment cheerful. "I will, Madame," he said, "and maybe some good fairy sent you here."

"Yes." I smiled back, though he was only a waiter, but also a man, and in grievous need. "Yes," I told him, "a good fairy to send you across the sea." Frank Case must do the rest of the work now in bringing back that stricken soul to health and hope, and he will, for he too has suffered.

Then, according to his advice, we went to the weekly market, and Rose, who rarely permits herself a remark about her superior officer, said I always seemed to get on with a waiter—but more particularly with the sad-hearted and the afflicted—and I told her it was because of my great sympathy with the one and my dependence on the other that, to think for me what I should eat, created a solicitude. And then I remembered a most kind and motherly waiter in Venice (what French wit was it who said the only man he ever knew who had become a mother was George Sand?). With my usual trustfulness I drank deeply and generously of Venice water—a thick, cold, tasty, lemon-coloured water, and, inured as I am to microbes, the Venetian ones brought on a sort of Asiatic cholera, and I really was for a few days quite alarmingly ill. My chambermaid was this motherly waiter, who probably saved my life, for when after days of fasting I found I was hungry again, I ordered a ripe tomato and a fresh cucumber for my first meal. My waiter-nurse-chambermaid knocked at the door and entered, truly pleased to find me better, when he espied the vegetables. His face darkened and became as tragic as did the face of Othello when he discovered Desdemona's pocket-handkerchief.

He said, "The Signora will not eat of these after her great seekness?"

"Yes," I replied, reaching for the plate; "the Signora will."

The motherly waiter seized the plate, and carried it to the window, saying, "If the Signora will permit me to say so, she is the most foolish lady I have known. [A splash.] I have trow the tomato into the canal, the cucumber has gone with heem."

"Oh," I said, almost crying, "and I was so hungry. I don't care—I'll order more."

But the waiter said, "You will not be allow, Signora, to keel your nice foolish self, because I now go to tell them in the dining-room not to send you nothing unless I bring heem. And I also tell your frens about the tomato and the cucumber." And he went out and came back shortly with some dry toast and a little beef tea. How like he was to a nice, fat, jolly, sensible, kind, old woman! He told me that he was very happy with his wife. I am sure he took good care of her.

Another dark and very romantic looking waiter in Venice I remember, who simply haunted my footsteps, undertaking the sweeping and dusting of my room in spite of quarrels and protestations from the chambermaid. At last my attraction for him was solved. I came from London, but was not like the English ladies, of whom he stood in mortal fear—my eyes were exactly like the eyes of his grandmother who had brought him up and been so kind—and he wanted, oh so badly, to go to London with me, for in London lived his fiancée—she was lady's-maid to a great lady, and she was pretty, and he had loved her all his life, and he found the separation unbearable, and he was sure that through me it would be ended. I explained the smallness of my establishment, and no men servants—he said nothing made any difference—that to be with Madame who had the eyes of his grandmother, and his fiancée, would be enough. I had to put him off with various promises, and I did try to get him a place, and wrote to him, and he to me, but nothing came of it. I hope by this time he is married to the sweetheart of his childhood, and settled in some nice little wayside inn in Italy.

We went to the Botanical Garden in the afternoon and there I saw a most fascinating love of a white cockatoo with the most original way of captivating hearts ever devised by bird. When I held my hand palm up toward him, he turned a somersault and landed on his back in my hand with his legs kicking up in the air, and actually laughed! We went to the Hague the next morning and there I was ill, and

noticed only the Dutch blankets as light as thistledown and delightfully warm.

At Haarlem we heard the wonderful organ play, and at Antwerp in the Rijks Museum I made a great discovery. Golf was played in 1631, for a portrait of a young girl, by de Geest, in a full length figure daintily dressed, holds a golf ball in one hand, and a golf club in the other. It hangs on the left hand side of the gallery almost at the entrance. And the miles of pictures and my stubborn will to see them put me in bed for several days, Joan of Arc, otherwise Rose, saving my life by bringing me back to England and giving me a rest cure. And I read in the lazy hours Mark Twain's delightful life of that inspired Virgin Soldier, Rose's prototype. It was Lord Morris, I think, who said the only two women of history who had saved their country were Joan of Arc and Kitty O'Shea.





'TIS ALMOST FAIRY TIME

CHAPTER LX

THE LEPRECHAUN'S POT OF GOLD

"Our tokens of love are for the most part barbarous, cold and lifeless, they do not represent our life. The only gift is a portion of thyself—therefore let the farmer give his corn—the miner his gem—the sailor coral and shells—the painter his picture and the poet his poem."

FOR some occult reason, from Emerson's many pages only this charming sentiment remains in my memory; maybe, that one day it was to have a deeper meaning to me. In my childhood my belief in the fairies was absolute. Mammy, when she said good-night, was always cautioned to leave the window wide open, and when the moonbeams slanted into my room, I always expected to see a cohort of fairies sliding down them, towards my bed. During the long, warm, summer afternoons, I often, with infinite pains and hours of work, made a fairy garden, a little place sweetly prepared for their midnight revels. The lake was a doll's beflowered washbowl, well set into the earth, lined with white sand, filled with clean spring water, and wreathed around with forget-me-nots. There was a little avenue of crêpe myrtle on one side, a flower of enchanting appearance, the leaves like bits of deep rose-crinkled crêpe, with a downy golden centre of sandal wood fragrance, and on the other side big stalks of mignonette arranged with great precision, while the avenue road was lavishly paved with pearly pebbles, and at the end came the *chef d'œuvre*, the throne of the fairy queen, a small moss-covered mound scattered over with rose leaves red and white, the finest roses in the garden stuck in the ground and nodding behind it, and a special attention to the queen was a court train left in readiness for

her. This regal garment was made of heartsease, taking as my foundation a piece of thin muslin, and sewing the flat flower in patches of purple and gold on either side, for no self-respecting fairy queen must have her lining showing ; and the last thing in the evening, with a small watering-pot, I left it all bejewelled and heavy with raindrops, for of course fairies never take cold. And the fairies never forgot.

With life's sad experience and many necessities, the fairy queen has ceased to be my favourite. She is too prosperous and too powerful. She has a kingdom of her own and is independent of me, so my heart has turned to the Leprechaun, the little Irish fairy philosopher, he who understands the value and forgetfulness of work, and sets a practical example himself of voluntary industry ; for knowing where all the crocks of gold in the world are, he lets them alone, and prefers to sit cross-legged, with his cocked hat on the side of his head, his bit of a dudeen stuck in his mouth, and by industriously making and mending the fairy shoes, earning his honest bread, rather than live a life of idleness and luxury. He scorns to belong to the vulgar rich. One day I met a Leprechaun. He didn't in the least look like one, being a grown-up, and in ordinary clothes. No, not quite that, for he wore a soft slouch hat, a long old faded friendly cloak, curious rings on handsome slender hands, and no gloves, although the weather was cold. He was striding along followed by a beautiful knowledgeable sheep dog, but I recognized him for a fairy at once. The Leprechaun's face was kind and gentle, and he carried all the crocks of gold, as Johannes Wolff would say, " widout to know it " in his head. He had inherited a few crocks, so he was in no hurry about those lying fallow, and there they might all be hidden now, only to use his own language, I " browbeat and bullied him " into parting with a little crock, which took the form of a fairy play. He has many more—his mind to him a golden kingdom is—whenever he chooses to give to the world his charming dreams, inspired by his closest friends, " the stars, streams and moonbeams." Unfortunately his pen has a powerful rival in his painter's brush, and much of his time is

passed in his studio in the lovely old-world garden of his country home. I wanted to be his neighbour, but he frankly discouraged me. "You at Witley! You would bore your head off in a fortnight. You love seeing people; I don't want to see people. You like brightness and variety; I like dullness, monotony, and silence. You like company; I love to be alone." But he is never alone, his satisfying poetical thoughts are his beautiful companions, while a happy optimistic nature like his knows nothing of the flight from despair, which drives human beings like myself to the wearying company of their kind. The delicious fairy play really grew out of the seed of "Blue Bell Time," it was the first of the many songs of Graham Robertson's which Frederick Norton has now set to music. When he of the faded cloak with Bob (the sheep dog) saw me off at the pretty seaside station of Sidmouth, and I returned on a cold, wet, spring day to London, Frederic Norton, that brilliant, versatile, contrary, delightful, witty, original man and musical genius dined with me the same evening, and much against his will I read "Blue Bell Time" aloud to him. I love reading aloud, I hate being read to. Frederic Norton is in the same position. When I put the book down he took it up and looked at it: that was a hopeful sign. When he went home he put it in his pocket. When he came again he sang me the verses set to his own sylvan melody. "The stars, streams, and moonbeams" are indeed as completely his in music, as they are Graham Robertson's in poetry. Then I asked the poet to lunch, for even poets must eat, and this one is an excellent housekeeper. The musician came too, and after the meal I begged Frederic Norton for a song, and as the story books say, "he struck a few chords" and began. I saw Graham Robertson lift his head and listen, surprised, and greatly pleased, and at the finish of the fairy-like accompaniment he said: "Mr Norton, your music has given my little nonsense verses a new meaning." Perhaps at that moment the happy idea shot into my mind of these two making a musical sylvan play together. When I spoke of it to the poet he completely scorned my suggestion and said, "I cannot do it;

what put such an idea into your head ? ” But I hammered away, and every time I saw him asked, “ When is the fairy play to begin ? ” It didn’t begin. Then a trouble, and an uncertainty, came to worry me, and I made an appeal to him. “ I want distraction and an interest badly, and I am much too distracted to give it to myself. You must do it for me. Do, do, write the fairy play.” This plan worked, and one morning he came with the beginning of the first act and read it. I listened with delight and enthusiasm, but couldn’t help thinking all the same, how much better I could have read it myself. From that time the play made steady progress. He could not go to his studio to paint just then, being occupied with a dear invalid who was very ill at home, so he wrote, and from time to time a little bundle of manuscript was posted to me, and “ Pinkie and the Fairies ” became my greatest interest and consolation. A kind friend lent me a little house at Littlehampton that summer, and I went down one afternoon to find it in complete order, with even my first dinner of a country chicken and fresh green peas all provided. Two American friends came to share my solitude, and one day the very last pages of Pinkie arrived. I wrote immediately to Frederic Norton and bade him come for the week-end. I could scarcely wait to tell him the fairy play was finished, and to ask him if he would do the music. He instantly and promptly refused, saying : “ I must write music for publishers, I can’t afford to sit down and write a whole fairy play that may never be produced. You are the most unpractical, unreasonable woman, you expect a fellow to do anything you suggest without thinking.”

I listened sweetly to the lecture, never for a moment losing heart, and got off as quickly as possible to other subjects.

The next day was warm and sunshiny. After breakfast we sat in the garden reading the Sunday papers, when I asked Frederic Norton to read “ Pinkie ” out aloud. He swallowed the bait without suspicion, and read it from the first line to the last. As I knew it by heart it wasn’t necessary for me to listen closely, being occupied with the same reflection with which I had heard the author read it, namely, how

much better I could have done it myself ; but I rose to the situation and encored the poem I love the best, the sleeping beauty's song, " The wells of sleep." (How charmingly Viola Tree sang it and looked it !) Frederic Norton said at the finish, " There's no doubt about it, that chap has charm in every line he writes, he's a wonder." I agreed, but was reticent. The next morning as Frederic Norton was starting for the train he turned back and said, " Just give me the fairy play, will you, I'll take another look at it going to town."

Singularly enough it was near at hand. I heard nothing for a fortnight, then a friend, himself very musical, wrote me from London, " I spent the afternoon with Norton yesterday. He was gaunt, unshorn and unshaven, and has not been out of the house for days, but he has written nine numbers of the fairy play and you will love them. His opening theme for Pinkie is a five-finger exercise with orchestral accompaniment, while ' Day was born a daffodil, day dies a rose ' is set to really exquisite music." When I returned to London, Frederic Norton said : " The thing got hold of me, I couldn't help it ; I don't care now whether it's produced or not, I'm writing for the pure love of it," and in that spirit it was finished. I was a bit anxious until the poet heard it, for he had very definite ideas of the kind of music he wanted, being musical himself ; and as Frederic Norton is more than usually sensitive to criticism, I feared a few arguments on both sides, and then what would happen ? But there were none. We three met one afternoon at Sandhills and Frederic Norton played all the music on the white piano, which he loathes. He says a white piano has no soul. And the poet loved the music and the musician loved the poetry, and except for the white piano all was harmony. But the music was only in Frederic Norton's head and fingers : he never put down a note of it and went off to America and stayed there for months, with it still in his head. And the fine, large, brindled mosquitoes of my native land, who love the stranger within their gates, stung him almost into his grave. Anyhow they gave him a slow, low, exhausting fever. Then Pinkie and the fairies called him back to

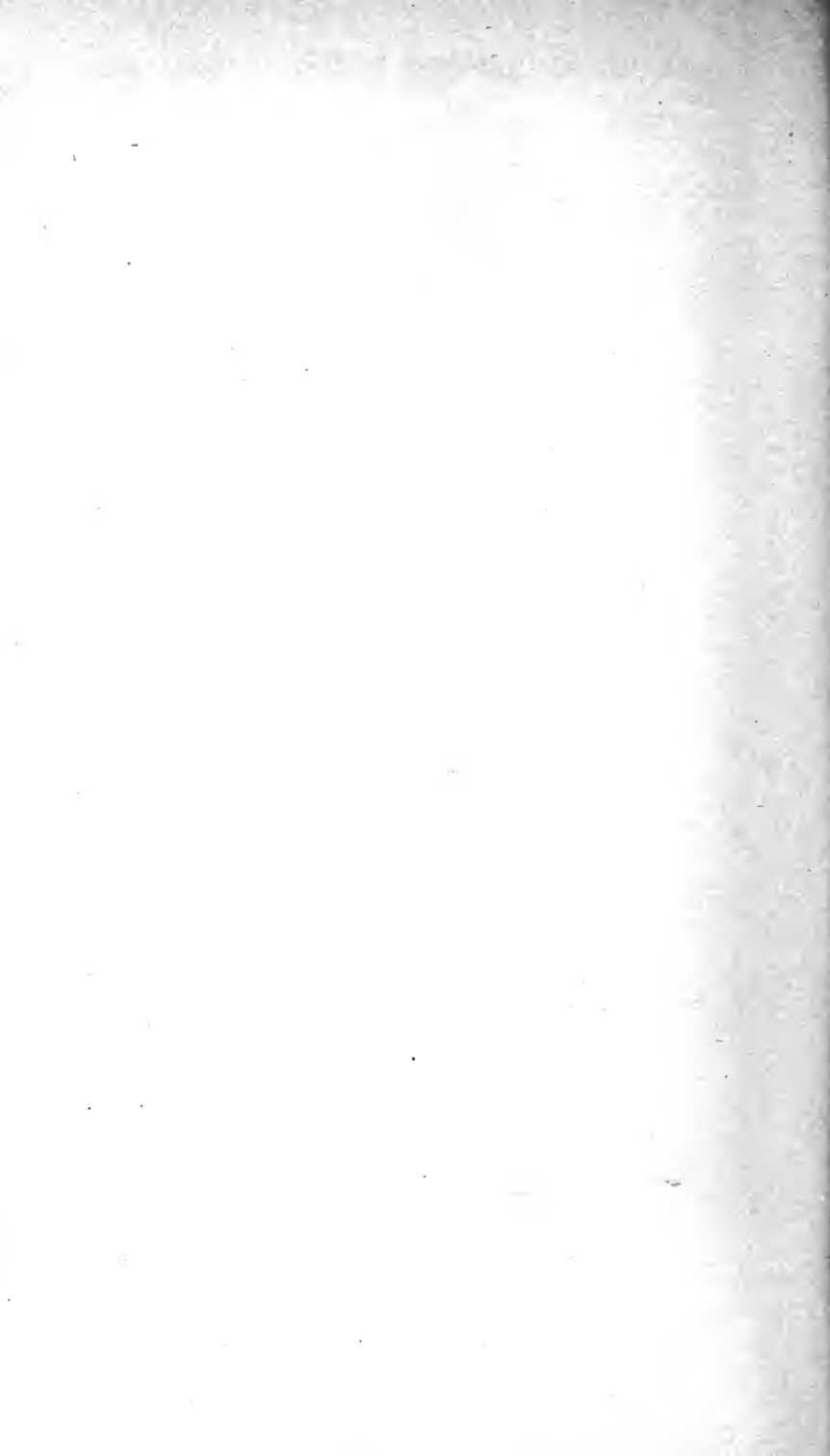
England, and ill as he was, he had all the music to write and orchestrate in a very short space of time ; for Elf Twinkle had whispered in Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, and he had suddenly and irrevocably lost his heart to Pinkie, and it was going to be done at His Majesty's Theatre *con amore* with the splendid caste and the great success that everybody knows by now, and this is how I became godmother to the fairies, and how at last they rewarded me for the love and faith I had, and still have in them. When the poet refused to share my enthusiasm for his work, I sent—"unbeknownst" to him—a copy of the book to W. L. Courtney of the "Daily Telegraph," that most generous and big-hearted of critics, and later received this encouraging letter :—

"DEAR MRS O'CONNOR,—I have read 'Pinkie and the Fairies' and find it the most charming thing which has come under my notice for years. But that is not enough, I place myself at your entire disposal to assist in getting it produced. Is it an indiscretion to ask the author's name? With kind regards.—Yours sincerely, W. L. COURTNEY "

How kind ! I had only asked for his opinion, he gave it and so much more ! So the play then had a godfather, as well as a godmother, and surely a curtain never went up on a production so surrounded with good wishes, and love, and tenderness, and enthusiasm, as "Pinkie and the Fairies." Every time I read it to a friend, which was reasonably often, Pinkie added a fresh lover to her list, and the lovers only loved her the more when Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree added his magic touch to that of the poet and the musician, making a happy trilogy of genius, and on December 19th, Pinkie not only completely conquered her admirers, but the public, and His Majesty's Theatre was filled by an appreciative, enthusiastic, laughing, applauding audience. It has been revived, and has every appearance of becoming like the primrose, the daisy and the buttercup, a hardy annual.



THE LEPRECHAUN AND THE GARDEN OF PINKIE AND THE FAIRIES



BLUEBELL TIME

I thought that the grass was green,
To-day it has all turned blue,
Had anyone told me—even a queen—
I would not have thought it true.

I wonder if I'm awake,
Those trees never used to grow
Bathing their feet in a deep blue lake—
I can't make it out, you know.

I always thought of the sky
High lifted over my head,
So please can you tell me the reason why
It's under my feet instead ?

But the Bellmen of Elfin Town
Ring out their delicate chime :
The world has not turned upside down—
It is only—Bluebell Time !

THE WELLS OF SLEEP

As I leaned over the Slumber Well
Where the wild white poppies grow,
The heart from my bosom slipped and fell
Into the depths below.
And the waters cool of that healing pool
So stilled the throb and the pain,
That my heart sank deep in the Wells of Sleep
And never came up again.

For Hushaway Honey Dew- rips
The slumberous Hydromel.
From wild white poppies that brush the lips
Of the way-worn pilgrim who stoops and sips
A draft from Lullabye Well,

So still I drone like a drowsy bee,
Where the wild white poppies weep,

And my heart that is drowned looks up to me,
Up through the Waters of Sleep.
Drowned it lies with its dream-dark eyes,
And a face so like mine own,
Image of me that is held in fee
By the Dreamland King on his throne.

And the Hushaway Honey Dew-drips,
The slumberous Hydromel !
Closing the eye and sealing the lip,
Stilling the frame to the finger-tip,
As the wild white poppy leaves fall and slip
Into the Lullabye Well.

CHAPTER LXI

MY STEPMOTHER FATE

“ It is not in the shipwreck or the strife
We feel benumbed, and wish to be no more,
But in the after-silence on the shore,
Where all is lost, except a little life.”

BYRON

WHATEVER I most dislike in life has been freely handed out to me by my unrelenting stepmother, Fate. A short stature (when I wanted to be tall), freckles (when I wanted to be plain white), irregular features (when I wanted a classical profile), a sort of general failure all round and a succession of tragedies (when I wanted a quiet life), while a very moderate success in any one direction would have filled me with gratitude and happiness. To have been the mother of many children, or a woman with a career: a novelist, a playwright, or an actress of repute, or a woman with a fortune great enough to benefit the world. But my life has been a conspicuous failure, partly through an intermittent will, but more largely in living through the lives of others—and when it is too late, and husband or children find other interests, women like myself are cast aside, and life becomes empty and valueless. I have loved too much, and given too much, until the value has ceased. Only the most generous and noble natures can stand continual spoiling. I have always felt that everybody near me—men, women, children, servants, and dogs—should, at no matter what cost to myself, be made happy; and a wrong sort of pride has

governed me—I have never exacted my proper due, and have taken only that which has been voluntary. What proud folly! Empires, States, and families, would all come to grief through such Arcadian sentiments.

Lady R. once discussed this question at length with me when I dropped into tea. We lived near each other in Chelsea—she, in a charming house on the embankment—and I found her sitting in her boudoir. Such a pretty room it was, the walls of dark green hung with a number of delightful fairy pictures by the late Richard Doyle (Dicky Doyle). One in particular I remember: a huge blackthorn tree with a ring of fairies madly, wildly, dancing round it, in the early glimmer of a clear bluish, greyish, whitish, pinkish dawn, and you felt in another moment the ring would break, and the fairies disperse with the night. The end of the room was occupied by a white cupboard filled with gaily decorated old china, bird cages tenanted by prize canaries, and singing bullfinches hung from the ceiling; the long French windows disclosed a near-by view of the Thames, and across the water appeared the tall trees and the fresh greenery of Battersea Park.

Dicky Doyle, by the way, visited the R.s some twenty years or more in the country. He was an acquired taste, and after six months or so, Lady R. rather wished him to go, but later on she said if he had gone she would have asked him to come back. These long visits still exist in the hospitable South, but even there they are growing less frequent.

What a kind and tender heart Lady R. had. On the day of which I speak she had been sitting with an old friend who was dying, not in her arms, but at her neck, since the early morning.

He was a much beloved aged bullfinch from whom she had never been separated. Even when she made country house visits he was taken with her, and hung in his cage in her bedroom: he knew her step, and always called her to hurry when he heard it. He had been growing weaker

all day, and sitting there with the poor little bunch of stricken feathers at her throat, we both felt moved to talk with affectionate candour of many things, and of my theory of wanting only what was voluntary.

She said she had felt exactly the same throughout her own life, but had lived long enough to know it was a mistaken view—that every woman should exact what was her right and due. Such a woman was valued, not the one who waited for voluntary tributes of affection. The world eventually passed her by, and at the end she was generally left alone and sorrowing. In her case this had not happened, for she was surrounded by love and troops of friends, she had escaped the result of her too generous temperament.

I went home filled with good and dignified resolutions, but I let two of the servants go to the theatre the same evening; and as the front door key had been mislaid I sat up, though mortally tired, until twelve o'clock to let them in.

Undoubtedly one of the healthiest tenets of Christian science is to pay more attention to yourself, and less to other people; never to rely on weak human creatures, nor to expect too much of them, but to get your happiness through God and self-reformation. The happiest women are those who are adored—the unhappiest those who adore. I belong to the latter class. Mrs M'Kenna, the mother of seven children, sons and daughters, was a notable example of the former. She was a small, elegant-looking woman, wearing her hair in bunches of curls at each side of her face, which was somewhat stern unless she smiled, then it was enchanting. Her voice was a deep contralto, like that of Queen Victoria, and she had an air of great authority that even her children of quite mature age never thought of disputing. Reginald M'Kenna, now First Lord of the Admiralty, was his mother's darling, and he decided, for her sake, not to marry while she lived, as a separation from her would have caused her pain—although he would not

have left her alone, as another son, Ernest M'Kenna, of a charming, gay disposition, and equally devoted to his mother, formed one of the household. What is this mysterious compelling power that to the end of a parent's long life makes children obedient?

I believe it to be a latent sternness, a severe and constant force of character, that every now and then appears—the iron hand within the velvet glove is there. I heard a mother, who is adored and cherished by her family, say: “If one of my children did a disgraceful thing, I would never see him again.” And she meant it. Another more tender mother would follow her ungrateful child to the prison gate. We all know that heartbreaking recitation of Yvette Guilbert where the son has killed his mother at the request of his sweetheart, and holds her dead heart in his hand. Suddenly he slips, and the heart speaks to give warning, saying: “Don't fall, dear son, and hurt yourself.”

It is the unselfish love of a mother for her children that gives one faith in God and the immortality of the soul. If the love of one human being for another is so divine, then nothing short of Divinity inspires it.

These reflections are rambling away from the blows which my unkind stepmother, Fate, has given me. Besides freckles, failures, and tragedies, she has dealt me a fair share of illnesses and diseases of a singular abhorrence to me, one of them being a closed tear-duct which caused a constant trickling of the eye for several years (and after three operations is now quite cured by a French salve given to me in the first instance by that greatly gifted, and wonderful musician and charming and lovable woman, Louise Douste. It has been in existence since the time of Louis XVI., and is a most remarkable remedy). Recurrent bronchitis annoys me; and gout, too, which I always dreaded, is my frequent companion, though I am not nearly so great a sufferer from it as Lady Colin Campbell, that splendid beauty and most excellent journalist, who is now held a close prisoner by pain. How well I recollect the first time

I ever saw her ! It was at a dinner party given by Mrs Campbell Praed, whose very successful novel, "Nadine," had just created something of a sensation. It was a thrilling book, and the interest was enhanced by the romance of its inspiration, which was, that in her buoyant youth a very remarkable, beautiful, and popular girl had made one of a country house party ; her lover had suddenly died at midnight in her room ; and she had (for she was of tall and powerful physique) dragged her tragic burden along the moonlit corridor, and in the morning he was found sitting in his chair many hours dead. One of the guests, hearing in the dead silence of the night a weird, scraping, muffled sound, looked out and saw a tall girl with her face set in a strange and terrible mask, dragging along a dead and stiffening body, the moonbeams slanting down upon the glassy, wide-opened eyes. He said he shut his door and prayed, but apparently he talked too, for the secret became known. Anyhow, the world admired the young lady's stoical self-control and courage, and later she married a great name and a great fortune, became the mother of many children and grandchildren, and lived happy ever after.

Lady Colin and I discussed "Nadine" and many other things, and were from that moment friends. She saw, of course, my very apparent admiration for her beauty, charm and intelligence. She was very dark ; her figure was perfect—tall, broad shoulders, a naturally lissom, slender waist, round, sloping hips, and in all her movements the grace of a Spaniard.

She wore a closely fitting princess dress of lace and jet, a string of pearls around her throat, a tiny golden key depending from it (she wears that key still, I wonder what tender secret it guards), and on her bodice a great bunch of mauve orchids. Now, instead of the orchids on her breast this cheerful invalid, who never leaves her house, should carry the Victoria Cross in recognition of life's continual battle, for she bears her suffering with a courage,

an equanimity, and a patience that are worthy of the bravest soldier.

We women, most of us, need all these qualities—courage, equanimity, and patience in reserve. But I have come to the conclusion that what we do not need is “proper pride.” How much better the world would be without it. Many of us have more than our fair share of proper, justifiable, or false pride. And we are all ashamed of something or other, and contrariwise it is very often the thing of which we should be most proud. I have never been ashamed of poverty, but always of unhappiness. To be bankrupt of happiness: that indeed is a poverty so bitter, it must ever be concealed from the world.

And I have always attempted to play the rôle of a happy and successful woman, but lately a sad independence has come to me, and I will play my part no more.

“ I will instruct my sorrow to be proud.
For grief is proud, and makes its owner stout.
Here I and sorrow sit.”

And I have a hope, that by making sorrow a friend, and not trying to run away from it, and cheat it, and defy it, and elude it, peace may come to me at last.

And it is on its way. This present life, which used to be the only thing, has lost its importance. For quite lately a surety, a sign, a token, came to me of my soul's separateness from the body. I felt it flutter in my breast, and know that it will live through all eternities. . . .

Circumstances change one's tastes and desires. My once passionate love of home, now that I am homeless, is passing, travel takes me out of myself and the happier past. In a hotel, when loneliness submerges me, and even tempts me on occasion “to sleep and wake no more,” I can ring the telephone bell, and ask the hotel clerk what's o'clock—and if insomnia, as it so often does, keeps me in its bitter grip all through the night, and

memory, the Lord of Hell, holds full sway, the silence can be broken. In a certain hotel where I often stay, the night clerk is a person of imagination, and when I ask the time, he answers comfortingly, "Twelve o'clock and all's well!" or "Two o'clock and all's well!" "Four o'clock and all's well!"

So, good-bye to you who have skimmed these pages. May the clock strike happy hours in your own home—blessed word—and may all be well with you!

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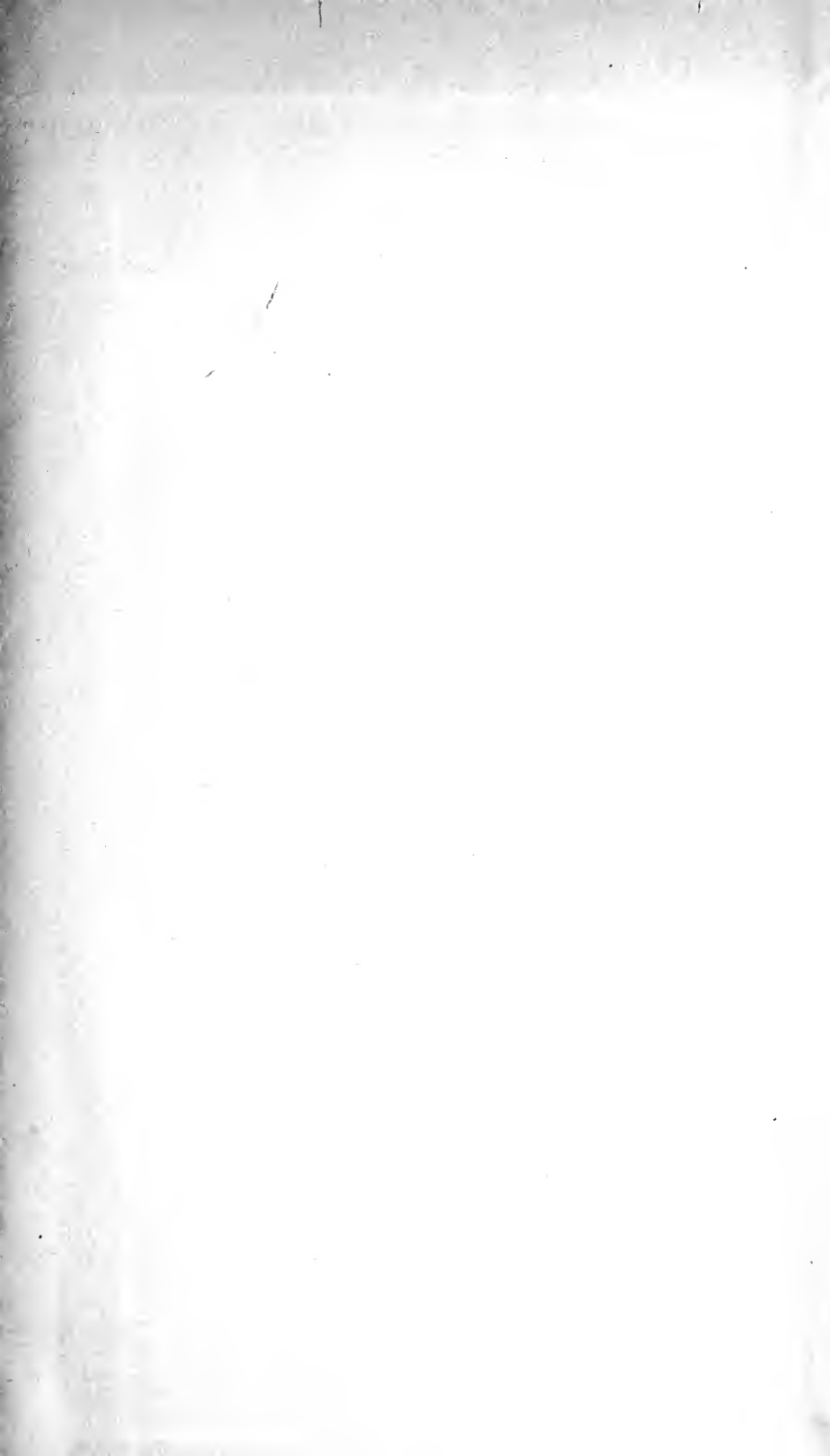
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